SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 414. FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 5TH, 1896. [ONE PENNY.

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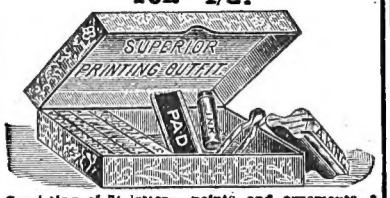

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Dec. 5, 1896.

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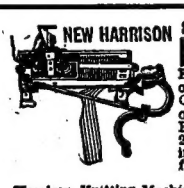

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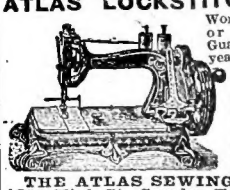

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SHORT STORIES

No. 414.] For the Week ending Dec. 5th, 1896. [1d.

The Last Drummer.

After the passage of the Beresina by Marshal Victor, who, on the evening of the 28th of November, 1812, had lost so heavily in attacking the bridges, the fragments of the French army, having twice dispersed the Russian bands, were resting for a little in the suburbs of Smorgoni.

Two officers on horseback, wrapped in their cloaks, with heads bent low, were passing along the road.

"You say, Colonel, that there are many French in the rear, in spite of the butchery at the bridges?"

"There are thousands! Stragglers of every corps, lying in the snow, unarmed!"

"You should have rallied them!"

"I could not have carried ten thousand men in my holsters!"

"True! But you should have sounded the alarm!"

"The alarm—for dead men!"

There was a moment of silence.

"You know that *he* will review the Third to-morrow. Ney charged me to inform you. You will head the column."

The Colonel uttered a formidable laugh.

"A review of the Third Corps!"

He turned towards the General, who appeared impassive—and his gaiety at once subsided.

"You are jesting."

"Colonel Champeaux!"

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

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"By the sword of Jehovah!" cried the Colonel; "there is but one Emperor who can review those men!"

He lifted his arm in the darkness, with a vague gesture, towards Heaven.

"A review!" he went on; "but it will be a battalion review! The Third Corps numbered thirty-five thousand infantrymen and two thousand four hundred cavalrymen at the opening of the campaign; it had ten thousand, all told, on quitting Moscow. Do you know how many yet remain?"

He did not wait for the response.

"There remain one hundred and thirty. I say nothing of the horses. They have been digested! I—Colonel Champeaux—do you know how many men I myself have?"

"How many?"

"Seven; the remnant of a fine regiment of grenadiers."

The General shuddered, and his horse made a movement.

"How many wounded?"

"Six."

"Officers?"

"One, and the sole effective. I am he."

And the Colonel burst out laughing. It seemed a "good one."

"Very well," said the General. "This is the fourth. To-morrow, at nine o'clock, the Third Corps must be assembled. You must find these survivors."

The Colonel interrupted violently:

"Look out for an army corps—in this desert!"

"Bah!" said the General. "The Emperor wishes it. Understand, Champeaux, the *Emperor!*"

And he plunged into the darkness.

* * * * *

Champeaux, erect amidst the snow, reflected a moment, snapped his jaws together, and turned back towards the plain.

"The Emperor——"

This luminous word he passed again and again mechanically before his imagination.

"The Emperor—if it's the Emperor—all the same. If it be he——"

The French army was encamped in the midst of an immense circle of waggons and tethered horses, that is to say, in disorder. Bands of stragglers and wounded—the straying of the former and the creeping pace of the latter directed by chance—had assembled round thousand of fires, which they fed with rotted planks, tops of caissons, saddle-pads, and broken wheels. Everywhere was a shoreless sea of phantoms, with here and there, looming in the midst of it, a miserable shelter.

From time to time, the heavy, immense, indefinable breadth of the storm swept by; and again a terrific detonation was heard—a caisson of shells exploded!

Champeaux, savage and irresolute, made his way through the groups of shadows, cursed by those whose despondent reveries he disturbed.

"A review—an Imperial review! To-morrow! These carrion have no longer any uniform! How are corps of regiments to be recognised? Their only raiment is wounds, saddle-cloths, horse-blankets. Find the different battalions if you can!"

He grasped a shoulder at hazard.

"What regiment?"

The man was stretched out in sleep. He opened one eye; then closed it heavily.

Champeaux drew his sabre a little way from its scabbard, entered the edge of the fire, the flame licking his tall boots, and turned towards the men, whose blackened hands and arms were extended towards the coals, dripping as they thawed. They did not so much as look at him. But Champeaux was already roaring out the order of the Emperor. Immediately, when this name was pronounced, a few heads were lifted—the oldest—and twelve cavalry men of the Third Corps came and ranged themselves behind the Colonel.

"Have you your horses?"

The soldiers began to laugh softly, in the manner of young girls.

"Well, we will do without them," said the Colonel. "March!"

He went on. He and his men boldly entered the fire circles. Champeaux delivered the Emperor's orders, which, in proportion as the difficulties increased, he magnified by dint of vociferation, until it became a sort of proclamation to the troops. This reminder of Napoleon drew thirty men from the bivouac fires, of whom eight were grenadiers.

"Fall in!" said the Colonel.

As he moved forward, he stumbled upon the encumbent forms of men embedded in the ice. Then all would bend down and would loosen their stiffened forms, wrenching them from the ground as if they were so many sticks of timber. They planted them upright, and Champeaux, with a sort of congestive exaltation, bawled out his chant:

"Blockheads! It's for the Emperor!"

These words straightened them up as if Murat himself had grabbed them by the scruff of the neck, and they set forth, laughing. After four hours, the effective strength of the Third Corps reached eighty men.

Towards midnight recruiting became difficult. A black, bitter cold that would have frozen Vesuvius or the four ideas of a fever-ridden brain laid the men in heaps by the bivouac fires, even among the glowing embers, rolled, massed together, curled up like balls, heads and limbs confounded. To get them on their feet Champeaux, who now seemed transfigured, promised them the Cross! Twenty-nine arose. They were young; they were of the last conscription.

"*Vive l'Autre!*" (Long live the Other!) cried Champeaux. "Forward!"

But his horse would not budge. Prophetic, shuddering, steaming, its neck extended, its hoofs as if glued to the soil, it stood over the body of a sleeper, snorting and nibbling at the leather trappings.

"Who goes there?" growled Champeaux, bending so low that he seemed to be hanging from the saddle.

"No one *goes*," said one of the grenadiers of his following. "It's the skeleton of an artillery-man."

The man who lay there did not budge. The Colonel drew his sabre. Then a rugged head emerged from a mask of snow, and two clear eyes surveyed Champeaux's pelisse.

"What do you want with me?"

"Get up!"

The man grew angry. He believed they were joking.

"You there, take care—one step more and I will run you through the gullet, Colonel though you be!"

He said this at a single breath. Then, panting like a dumb brute, he fell back, exposing his body to view, from which a leg had been severed close to the trunk.

Champeaux made the round of two other bivouacs,

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and towards three o'clock, the troop numbering one hundred and twenty-five men, he despaired of finding the five others.

"We will return," he said.

They set out; but on the way the Colonel found a light infantryman beating his feet together between the shafts of a waggon, and scraping the ice from a piece of horse's leg.

"Follow us!" shouted the troop.

"I am not to be dist ırbed; I am dining," answered the spectre.

Champeaux raised one of his pistols, and the soldier sprang aside.

"Anyhow, let me get my drum!"

Champeaux did not stop him. He was struck by an idea which struck him to the very soul; he laid hold of the man.

"You are a drummer?"

"Yes."

He was a little fellow, without beard, slender, with hair like a child's.

"And you have kept your drum?"

"Here it is," said the conscript. "Why not? Since I am a drummer—I have my drum. If I hadn't my drum——"

Champeaux seized him, put him in the saddle, kissed him on both cheeks, as he would a woman. Alone in the midst of that agonised army which had abandoned its arms and insignia this child, who had guarded his drum, appeared to him a prodigy.

"Forward!"

They returned to the plain and sheltered themselves under the waggons.

Champeaux watched until morning.

* * * * *

Towards eight o'clock Napoleon appeared. He had just inspected certain corps, and had dictated the Twenty-ninth bulletin, by which France was startled and dumfoundered. Ney was at his side, Ledru des Essarts came in search of Champeaux.

"Come," said he.

The Emperor was on a slight eminence. The Third Corps, erect, drawn up four files deep, was posted a hundred yards away.

Champeaux, who was mounted, drew his sabre.

"Attention, my fine fellows," he said, in a subdued voice. "*L'Autre vous regarde*" (the Other is gazing at you). "Forward! Limber your legs! Tramp, I say. Make believe you are an army. Mar-r- r-r -rche!"

At once, more impetuous than a hunter's pack in full cry, with greater impulse, more ringing, more sonorous than the vanished bugles of the entire corps, there burst forth a terrible rann-plann-plann!—and those one hundred and twenty-five men, relics of the superb thirty-eight thousand of Elkingen, defiled before the cold gaze of the Emperor.

"Pann-rrrann! plann-plann!" chanted the drum-sticks.

Four files front, accurate of step, elbows touching, heads thrown back, those human remnants crossed a corner of the plain, to the consecrated roll of the drum! Champeaux, with his sabre aloft as at the Carrousel, rode behind the little drummer.

This tragic parade, amidst the snow, amidst unequalled suffering, before a stupefied army, so shocked the stern old Marshal that—beside the impassive Napoleon—his knees trembled under him. They were without uniforms, those one hundred and twenty-five, but they had the noble mien of martyrs. Even the drummer was known as such only by the tragic fury of his rataplan!

"Pann! pann!" sounded the drum. "Plann! plann!"

At the head, as directed by the regulations, there were eight Grenadiers of the Guard, with chimerical faces, some topped with soiled caps, stained with the smoke of the battle and bivouac; others, a six-months' beard on their cheeks, with their heads thrust into tall cylinders of fur. And all were old, their bodies barred with solemn cicatrices.

"Prrann! pann! pann! rrrann—rrann—pan! pan! pan!"

The drummer wrought himself into a rage. sounding, beating, smiting his drum at the head of the column..

Next came sixty-eight light infantrymen, old, like the Grenadiers, one third of them in black gaiters and the others shod with strips of leather.

"Beware the Emperor!" cried Champeaux.

"Rrrann! plann! plann!—pataplann! plann! plann!"

Following, bareheaded, were two soldiers of the engineer corps, with neither sabres nor cartridge pouches frightfully slashed by the Cossacks, but still carrying their spades.

"Rrra-rra-rra-pataplann! paum! paum!" clamoured the tireless drummer.

Then appeared a disordered cavalry without horses, hobbling, limping along. but so proudly courageous that they would have retraced their steps on the instant and have reconquered the Russians; eight cuirassiers, without cuirasses, lifting towards the Emperor their seamed faces, the fur bands of the helmets tightened about their necks, the most of them clad in Russian pelisses, which they had won by dint of sword-play. One, an enormous fellow, had no trousers, and had tied a blue saddle-cloth about his thighs. He marched with bare ankles through the snow. Beside him trailed a dismounted dragoon, with a cap that had been shorn by musket-balls, hairless, plaqueless, without cordon or plume.

Bravely, drumsticks, rattle away! and you, drummer, roll, roll, for the tattered pandours of love!

"Rrrann! rrrann!—pataplann!"

Last, approached in four close lines, the artillerymen, fifteen in number, cannoniers of Piedmont, with neither white-looped cordons nor drumsticks; twelve dragoons, riddled with grape-shot, in bloody coats that once were green, striped like a tiger-skin with powder and rent with lance-thrusts, their silver dolmans flapping in formles tatters.

"Rrrann! rrrataplann!" Beat with your might; beat again, spare not, O drummer of Tabor! O death's drummer! "Pataplann; rrrataplann! plaum! plaum!"

"Don't look like sausages!" said Champeaux. "Yonder is the Emperor!"

Napoleon, in fact, erect upon his steed, unmoved and fatal as destiny, was awaiting them.

This knot of heroes, one of the few that remained of that great *epic*, defiled past him, their eyes turned towards his face. The drummer continued through the plain to beat his drum; the pitiful battalion followed him; and as if muffled in funereal crape, the rolling of the drum reverberated against the rigid walls of that imperial soul; already distant, becoming vaguer and vaguer, dying upon the ear, it seemed to the Emperor like the tolling of brazen tongues, announcing a foregone conclusion, the supreme alarm, the irremediable knell o his puissant armies.

GEORGE D'ESPARBES.

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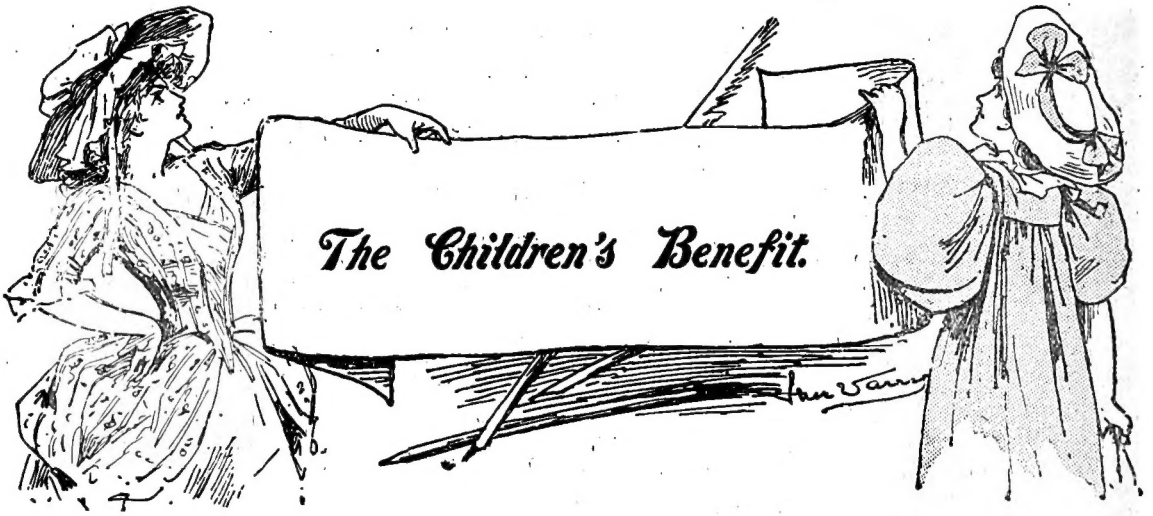

The Children's Benefit.

In the crude, half-formed world in which we live happiness must, to a great extent, be comparative, and the same rule holds good in regard to our creature comforts. We are never so comfortable, never so impregnated with cosiness as when the elements are waging their noisy warfare without, and when we may imagine how miserable we would be were we forced to brave the storm and endure the biting cold.

This was the case with the semicircle of men gathered round the fire roaring in the great chimney. Every snowcloud driving against the rattling windows increased their appreciation of the warmth and comforts of the room and caused them to turn with keener relish to the cheerful blaze. Every shrieking gust of wind lent to their minds a more delicate perception of the jests that fell from the lips of the celebrated comedian, Henry Leonard, who amused them, in varying degrees, by the reception of scraps of dialogue culled from the many comedies he had played in during his recent tour.

Leonard's personality contained, in a marked degree, that indescribable magnetic charm which enables every natural actor to control both the thoughts and emotions of his audience.

And with this charm was blended in happy proportion a fascinating versatility. Tragedy and comedy are near of kin all the world over; in Leonard they dwelt in amicable union. Grave or gay, he was a king among players, and could call forth either tears or laughter, according to his will.

In the midst of the hilarious burst of applause which greeted one of the actor's sallies, the door was timidly pushed open and a pair of ragged, half-frozen children stole into the room. With uncertain steps and eyes sharpened by cautious fear, they slowly made their way behind the laughing group, and presently stood by Leonard's side, rolling their frightened eyes about the room.

"Won't somebody give us some money? We have nothing to buy food with!" The little lad's teeth chattered with cold, and his blue lips were so stiff he could hardly frame his words; but he stood there before the men and, grasping his sister's hand tightly in his own, made his appeal with wistful eagerness.

"We don't want it for ourselves—we can starve—but father died last week and mother——" A sob cut his speech short; but bravely fighting back the tears that sprang to his eyes, he continued, huskily: "Mother will die, too, if we can get her no food; she is starving."

Nervously fingering his cap, he glanced from face to face with eyes full of pathetic entreaty. Then his lips began to tremble and hot tears rose to his eyes, as he saw nothing but coldness in the faces about him. Turning drearily away, he drew his sister towards the door, attempting to console her grief with brave words, although his own heart was almost breaking at the thought of the sweet face, all seamed with care, and hollow with hunger, so patiently awaiting their return.

"Won't you give us something, sir?" he asked, in a choked voice, extending his hands appealingly towards Leonard. "Mother is dying, sir; dying for want of food. Oh, do give us something!" The little fellow half-turned away and fell to sobbing as though his heart would break.

Tenderly the actor caught the ragged figure in his arms and put it in a chair. Then he turned and gazed fixedly on the silent men around him.

"Twenty years ago," he began abruptly, "my father lost his fortune, and we sank, almost in a day, from wealth to abject poverty. We scarcely had the necessaries of life, and were forced to see two delicately nurtured women who had been brought up in every luxury within the reach of wealth—two women who had been shielded by jealous love from every sorrow and guarded from every care—living out their lives in a foul and noisome tenement house. We were forced to drag them down with us to an existence more miserable than that of a beast. And these two women were my mother and my sister."

Leonard paused: his face looked pinched and drawn, his eyes glistened with unshed tears, and his voice shook with suppressed emotion.

"I was fifteen," he continued drearily, "old enough to appreciate their suffering, old enough to perceive that death, for my mother, at least, must follow in the footsteps of poverty.

"Ah! how brave they were! In their attempts to force upon my father and myself the belief that their lives were not the martyrdoms we knew them to be, they

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resorted to subterfuges that would have been pitiful had they not been beautiful—glorified by unselfish love. How often mother has met us at the door as we returned from our work and told us with loving words that she had chanced on some old-time friends and had dined elsewhere. She would smile as she told us that loving falsehood, and, although she had not tasted food in God knows how long, she would strive to force her portion of the scanty meal upon us."

Leonard's voice broke and he turned his face, twitching with pain, from his staring auditors. None were apathetic now, and tears of pity were hanging in many of the eyes fastened on the figure before the fire.

"One day my father was brought home crippled for life," Leonard continued dully. "I, a boy of fifteen, was the only one left to earn bread to fill those three mouths. I worked both night and day, I worked as a man never worked before; but what could my earnings avail among so many? Day by day I saw my mother growing paler: great blue hollows appeared beneath her eyes, and each hour left her thinner and weaker than the last.

"My God! she was starving to death before my eyes and I was powerless to save her!"

Leonard sprang up and paced the floor with feverish, uneven strides.

"Hell can hold no torture to equal what I suffered then, heaven no joy to compensate it. Both father and mother died when a crumb from a rich man's pocket, a crumb too small to be noticed by him, would have saved them."

He buried his face in his hands, and dry, hard sobs shook him from head to foot.

When he turned again to his auditors, his appearance had undergone a complete change. His figure, as he crouched before the fire, looked pinched and small, his clothes seemed to hang in folds from his shoulders, his cheeks were hollow, and his whole figure shivered with cold.

"And now, my sister, all that is left to me in the world is dying, starving before my eyes!" he cried shrilly, his glittering eyes full of wild appeal. "I have sought work in every quarter; I have gone into the streets and begged alms in the name of the God above us, and I have failed to get anything. Do you hear? Failed! O, can there be a merciful God above us, when I am forced to see her die like this?

"For the love of that God! For the love of all you hold dearest, give me something!" he pleaded wildly stretching hands that shook with emotion appealingly towards the silent group.

"You are rich; you would not miss so small a sum, and you can save her—save my sweet sister! For God's sake do not leave her to starve to death!" His face aflame with passionate entreaty, Leonard sprang up and moved among the spectators, holding a hat in his hand.

All, stirred to the depths of their hearts, strove to give vent to their emotions in the magnitude of their offerings, and Leonard returned to his seat by the fire, his hat overflowing with bank-notes.

"Thanks, gentlemen," he said quietly.

He turned to look for the children, and, to his surprise, found the little pair at his elbow with tears shining in their eyes.

"What is the matter?" he asked softly.

"We're so sorry for you, sir," the boy answered huskily; "and we want to give you this for your sister. 'Tain't much, but it's all we have, and we want you to take it, 'cause, I guess, you want it more'n we do; and, besides, we can get a couple more before we get home." The boy eagerly pushed two pennies into the actor's hand, his face bright with pleasure at giving.

"This, gentlemen, is *charity*," Leonard said gravely. Then, turning to the boy, he placed the money in his hand and told him to hasten home to his mother.

"But it's for your sister," the little lad said stoutly, although his eyes glistened at sight of the collection.

"I have no sister," the actor answered, smiling.

"And you ain't poor?" asked the puzzled urchin.

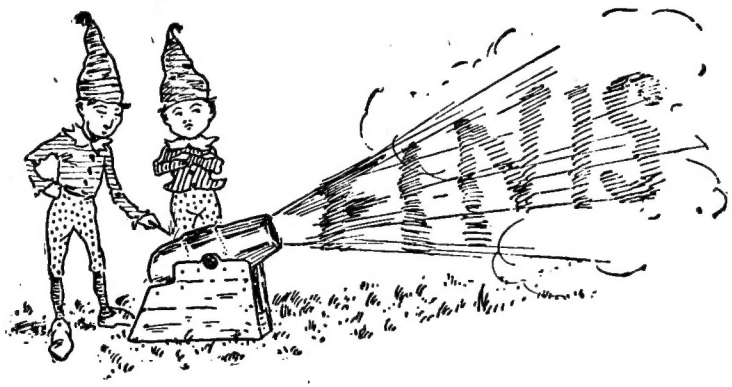
"No." The actor rose, and walking to the door, sent the children on their way rejoicing.

"That was very fair," he said, as he reseated himself.

"Your story was not true, I gather from what you told the boy," a spectator said.

"No," answered Leonard, lazily lighting a cigarette, "merely a bit of original tragedy for the sake of the children."

HOWARD L. THOMAS.



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My Fellow Voyager

An Amateur Aeronaut's Adventure.

"Yes, Ned, it's the only way to save me. It's my bread, the balloon is, and they'll make no more of ripping the *Defiance* to ribbons than I should of chipping the shell of an egg at breakfast, those peppery Marseillais!"

The situation was, to say the least of it, exceedingly awkward. It was the evening of a fête day, in brilliant, sultry autumn weather, such as may be looked for in the south of France; and the Ducasse, or local festival of St. Maure, a village lying on the coast some two leagues eastward of Marseilles, had drawn thither a swarm of the population of the old Phocæan city.

There was dancing in progress—the merry sound of the fiddles floating upward through the vine tendrils that hung across the open window reached my ears as I stood beside the bed—but the great attraction of the evening's entertainment was to be a balloon ascent, in the midst of fireworks, on the part of an English aeronaut, who, in the glowing language of the hand-bills and posters that had for ten days past advertised the trip, was described as "The Famous, the Intrepid Oliver Killick, the King of the Air."

As for myself, I was simply a young artist, Edward Holmes by name, not long since returned from a protracted course of art study in Rome, and who found it hard enough, by touching up photographs, "finishing" the sketches of amateurs, and taking, at the lowest rate of remuneration, the portrait of whoever favoured me with a sitting, to procure the wherewithal to live.

I had been accidentally thrown a good deal in the company of Killick, who had for some time been exhibiting his balloon in various towns of the South, and who had shown me some kindness, as a fellow-countryman; while I, on my part, had a regard for the old man, whose quaint anecdotes of his experience as a travelling balloonist were often amusing.

And now a serious difficulty had, at the last moment, arisen. There, in the garden of the village inn, fenced off by ropes and stakes from the pressure of the crowd that surged around, was the *Defiance*, fully inflated, straining at the cords that fastened it to the earth, and ready for use, while on his bed lay the unlucky "King of the Air," groaning and disabled.

He had sent for me to visit in his room shortly after the occurrence of the accident—a stumble over a loose plank and a fall downstairs—and though I sympathised with him sincerely, I had been quite at a loss for an expedient. Killick was a heavy, elderly man, and in his fall had severely sprained his right wrist and injured his thumb, besides receiving a cut on the left temple.

"That's nothing," he said half querulously, as I examined the hurt; "I've had worse in touching the ground many's the day. It's the thumb that's the matter—the thumb and the wrist. I can't handle the valve-ropes with this crippled arm any more than a school-girl could do it. And what's to happen now?"

My first idea was that the accident, and all the consequent inability of the balloonist to give the promised exhibition, should be announced, and an apology made to the public; but the veteran decidedly negatived this apparently obvious proceeding.

He reminded me of the irascible character of a mob everywhere, and above all of a southern French mob, and assured me of what I could readily believe, that no excuse would be accepted by the fiery Marseillais, baulked of the long-looked-for treat of an ascent; they would

"It's the only way to save me."

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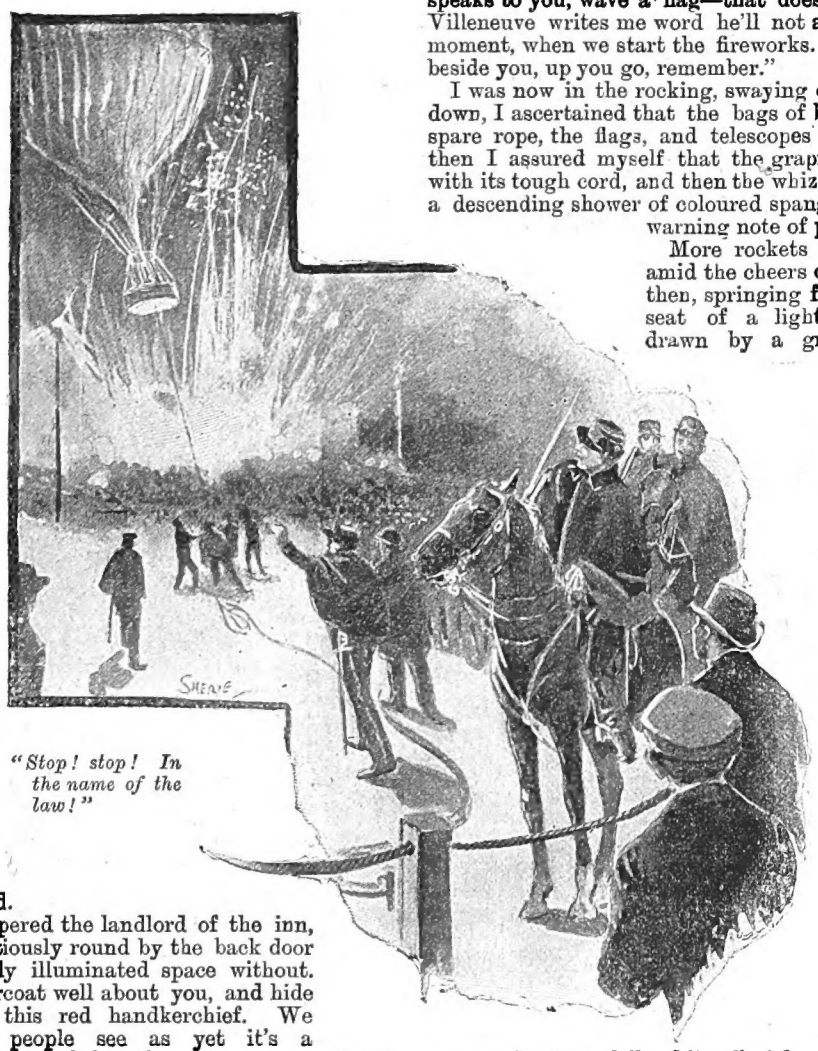
certainly destroy the balloon, and not improbably offer violence to the aeronaut.

The very loss of the *Defiance* would be a serious disaster to its owner. Then, too, a rich landed proprietor of the neighbourhood—a vain young man, with a taste for notoriety—had offered fifteen louis d'or to be taken up as a passenger; and to disappoint M. Victor de Villeneuve, and lose three hundred francs, was also an unwelcome contingency.

To my surprise, Killick proposed that I should go up in his stead, and undertake for the occasion the office of aeronaut. I had indeed accompanied him, while we were both at Nice, in two short ascents, and had learnt from him how to manage the valves and ballast—the rudiments of the art of ballooning.

I was young, active, had a steady head, and the owner of the *Defiance* was quite willing to intrust her to me, if I would but so far oblige him. Perhaps the novelty of the notion, acting on a somewhat adventurous fancy, made me yield the more readily to the old man's entreaty. I said "Yes," and was held to my word.



"Stop! stop! In the name of the law!"

"Come," whispered the landlord of the inn, as he led me cautiously round by the back door into the partially illuminated space without. "Wrap your overcoat well about you, and hide your face with this red handkerchief. We musn't let the people see as yet it's a raw hand that's to go aloft. Once up, you can laugh it off."

This was all very well for the innkeeper, whose only wish was to keep the rabble in good humour, and avoid a riot, which might lead to the pillage of his cellar and the demolition of his furniture; but I began inwardly to question the wisdom of my own choice.

However, it was too late to withdraw. One glance at the sea of keen, olive-complexioned faces, the flashing eyes and impassioned gestures of the spectators, was enough to show the risk that would attend the giving of wilful offence. They were gay enough, laughing blithely, but it would not have required much to arouse them to any violence.

There was the *Defiance*, majestically poised above the ground like a vessel riding at anchor. There was nothing for it but to carry out, as best I might, the madcap enterprise on which I had embarked.

"You had better get into the car, and be ready," said the landlord, still in an undertone, as he passed me through the cordon of police that kept back the foremost of the spectators. "Don't talk; but if anybody speaks to you, wave a flag—that does as well. M. de Villeneuve writes me word he'll not arrive till the last moment, when we start the fireworks. As soon as he's beside you, up you go, remember."

I was now in the rocking, swaying car, and, stooping down, I ascertained that the bags of ballast, the coil of spare rope, the flags, and telescopes were at my feet; then I assured myself that the grapnel was provided with its tough cord, and then the whizz of a rocket, and a descending shower of coloured spangles of fire, gave a warning note of preparation.

More rockets now soared aloft, amid the cheers of the crowd, and then, springing from the driving-seat of a light open carriage, drawn by a grey horse, there appeared a stout, well-dressed man, who elbowed his way so quickly through the throng that I had scarcely time to conjecture that this must be the volunteer companion of my aerial voyage, M. Victor de Villeneuve, before he scrambled into the car, and was at my side.

"Let go, boys!" he cried in a sharp, imperious tone, to the men who held the ropes. "Let go the ropes! Do you hear?"

A voice raised in accents of command seldom fails of its effect, however questionable may be the right of him who speaks, and the men addressed, in their astonishment, mechanically obeyed. The balloon rose a little, nothing now restraining its upward flight save the trigger cord, firmly moored to a post below, the spring being in my grasp.

"Well, comrade, off we go!" exclaimed the passenger, with a jovial laugh that had scarcely the ring of honest mirth in it.

Perhaps M. de Villeneuve, for all his swaggering deportment, was ill at ease as to the results of our voyage, and strove to carry it off gaily. Such were my

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Deliberately pointed the barrel at my head.

thoughts as the catherine-wheels began to revolve in cascades of whirling fire, and the crowd to cheer. It was the moment for our start; but I hesitated to pull the trigger, for now a strange bustle and confusion below attracted my attention.

A mounted gendarme, his sabre and carbine clanking, had ridden up at the full gallop of his reeking horse, followed at some distance by three others, who spurred furiously forward. There were a few hurried questions, then a smothered outcry, a roar of voices, and a swaying backward and forward of the excited populace.

I looked down at the crowd of upturned faces.

"Stop! stop! In the name of the law!" cried out the brigadier of the foot-police.

"Let go, fool!" thundered the man who sat beside me in the car.

"But it is the police that——" I began, thinking that M. de Villeneuve had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Come down! stop—haul the rope!" was the shout from below; but as the words reached my ear, my companion bent forward. Something flashed in his hand —a knife—the cord was cut, and the balloon started upwards.

"In the name of the law, stop—ah! you won't? Here goes then!" cried a gendarme, discharging his carbine, an example that was followed by his comrades; but the balls whistled idly by, while we rose and rose until the inn and the gardens, and the shouting crowd, and the spluttering fireworks had diminished to pigmy size, and presently disappeared altogether; and the balloon rode on, solitary, through the air.

"Aha!" said M. de Villeneuve, with a chuckle that was incomprehensible to me. "A singular salute our friends gave us—eh, when they bade us *bon voyage?*"

The moon, half-full, had now risen, and I could see the face of my companion—the swarthy, keen face of a man forty years of age, with short, dark hair, slightly grizzled, fiery black eyes, and very white, strong, sharp-pointed teeth, which gave him, when he smiled, somewhat the expression of a laughing wolf. He was a man of powerful frame, and the fingers of the gloved hand which he now laid upon my arm were as strong as steel.

"Well," said the strange passenger, with a grin that an ogre might have envied, "you take me for a queer specimen of the French provencial gentry—eh? But first, how comes it that Killick is absent, and a youngster of your age has the honour to be my pilot?"

I told him briefly, and in offended tones, what had occurred, and how it was that he and I found ourselves together so far above *terra firma*, at the same time cautioning him not, as he had done before, to take it on himself to interfere with the management of the balloon.

"We must now," I added, "look out for a place to descend, for the wind is freshening, and——"

"Let it freshen!" rudely interrupted M. de Villeneuve. "Sets fair for Spain, does it not?"

"For Spain?" I echoed, in surprise. Could this self-conceited country gentleman really imagine that we were bound on such a journey as that? I could not help laughing, as I said: "Why for Spain, monsieur?"

"Well, Italy would have served me as well, had the wind been a westerly one. I talk both languages, and know the wine-houses in Cadiz as well as I do those of Genoa," answered M. de Villeneuve, again chuckling. "What are you doing with that rope?"

"I am opening the valve above," I answered coldly, "because it is time now to sink to a lower level, and descend——"

"Descend, eh," briskly put in my fellow-voyager. "We may as well understand each other at once. Hands off the rope, I say, if you would keep the roof on your skull," he added threateningly, as he drew a revolver from his pocket, and deliberately pointed the barrel at my head. "I'll show you who's captain up here!"

My blood ran cold as the horrible thought flashed upon me that I was, at that fearful height above the earth, in company with a madman. Nothing, surely, save

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insanity, could account for the extraordinary behaviour of M. de Villeneuve?

But I suppose I put a tolerably good countenance on the matter, for my formidable companion laughed again, but less ill-naturedly, as he said:

"You face it out well. I like a youngster who shows a heart somewhat bigger than a chicken's. And I'm not so bad as I look—never do this!"—he drew his hand as he spoke, edgeways, with a meaning gesture, across his throat—"when I can get my profits by quieter means. But you stare at me as if I were a mountebank selling quack medicines. Can you guess why those gendarmes were so peremptory an hour ago? Because they wanted the pleasure of my company back to Toulon, that's all. Did you never hear of Casse-tête?"

"Casse-tête?" I repeated in perplexity.

"Yes, Pierre Paul Grincheux, if you please, *alias* Casse-tête," said the man, with an odd sort of pride. "It's a name, if you read the reports of our tribunals, that you may have met with. Toulon, Brest, Lambessa—I know every one of those charming retreats. I have had enough sea-air for a while, so I gave myself leave of absence."

And then I remembered to have seen a paragraph in a local paper announcing the escape from Toulon of a criminal of the most dangerous type, who had not yet been recaptured, and whose grotesque nickname was Casse-tête. And here was I, voyaging by night in a balloon, in company with a runaway galley-slave, well armed with knife and pistol, and more than a match in strength for me, even had he been less well provided with weapons.

My terrible companion was only too much disposed to be talkative; and as we swept onward before the freshening wind, he was kind enough to favour me with a few brief anecdotes of his past career, in which the jocose and horrible seemed to mingle in cynical confusion. The one point on which he was uncommunicative was the manner of his recent escape from Toulon; or how—probably owing to the complicity of others—he became possessed of his weapons. But he told graphically of the ten days of hardship and hunger which he had endured while skulking among the rocky hills by night, and lying hidden among thorny brakes by day, until at last he broke into a pæan of triumph in relating how he had encountered and robbed the true M. de Villeneuve on his way to the village fête.

"Twenty shining naps in his purse!" he said exultingly, "and three thousand francs besides in notes. Well, I left him gagged and bound to a tree, after I had taken the freedom to change clothes with him; and there he stands, no doubt, trembling, but fortunate to keep a whole skin. And I found in his pocket the letter of M. Killick, promising to take him as a passenger in the balloon here, and so——"

And so the idea had presented itself to this daring and ready-witted ruffian to personate the victim of his recent robbery, and thus to procure the means of flight in what was certainly an unexampled fashion, while I was the luckless scapegoat of his audacious enterprise. Meanwhile the wind, as I have said, was rising, and as we hurried on I looked downward, and saw, by the shimmer of the moonlight on the tremulous waves, that the sea was below us. I could not forbear an exclamation of dismay.

The desperado at my side also looked down.

"Bah! sea or land! what matters it?" he said recklessly. "Throw out ballast—do you hear me?" and I complied.

The lightning sent its flaming arrows across the darkening sky.

The balloon instantly rose, and it presently became perceptibly colder, so that I shivered, and had to chafe my hands together to prevent them from stiffening. My companion's iron frame showed no signs of suffering from the abrupt lowering of the temperature; but after a time the *Defiance* seemed to be nearer to the sea, for I heard the low roar of the waves; and then Casse-tête impatiently flung out another bag of ballast, and we rose.

My recollections of the voyage of that miserable night spent thus, and in such company, are vague. I suffered from cold and fatigue, and mechanically I obeyed the directions of the escaped galley-slave, who had now assumed the command. There was no doubt about the fixity of his determination to continue the desperate flight until we should be across the French frontier. How long our aerial journey might prove, undertaken as it was without warm clothing, provisions, or brandy, I could not conjecture, while it was certain that we were hurrying along with great velocity—how swiftly I had no means of calculating—before the wind.

So far as I could tell, the direction of the wind was uniform—steadily from north-east by east. The sea which I had seen beneath us was, no doubt, a part of

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the gulf, lying somewhere between the mouths of the river Rhone and the Spanish border, but the remainder of our route was, in theory, mere guess work.

A slight shift in the wind might cause us to be carried out into the broad Mediterranean. We might even drift beyond the Straits, into the broader Atlantic to perish, as many a balloon voyager has died, without a record of his fate. Where we were I could not tell. The dark, blurred outline of what lay beneath seemed to indicate hills and woods, not sea.

"If we come down in France, my young friend," said the strident voice of the escaped convict, as we floated through masses of misty vapour, which wetted me to the skin, "you may bid adieu to the world. It is no fault of yours, you will say, if the wind carries this flapping gas-bag to Poitous or the Nivernais. No; but is Casse-tête to wait while you crawl to the nearest brigade of gendarmerie to give notice that your fellow-traveller was Pierre Paul Grincheux, an escaped gaol-bird? No, thank you! So sure as we drop on French soil, with the OFFICIAL JOURNAL posted on the walls of the Poste de Police, I prove that one can keep a secret better than two."

I am not unduly timorous, but my heart sank within me as I heard these words, uttered with an emphatic ferocity which left no doubt of the speaker's sinister meaning. I fully made up my mind, should the desperado at my side attempt to realise his threats, that I would not be by any means passive in the struggle; but his weapons and his strength left little hope of a satisfactory ending to such a contest.

"There's something wrong with the valves," said my companion roughly, an hour later. "The gas is escaping, and we are sinking. You, aeronaut, must ascend the netting and stop the flow of the gas."

I was very reluctant to obey. To climb the netting of a balloon, when at a great height above the earth, is never a very pleasant task; but to do so, leaving behind me a ruffian who might at any moment shoot or stab me as I descended, thus relieving himself from an inconvenient witness, was indeed irksome. However, Casse-tête evinced such pertinacity, and swore so many grisly oaths, that at last I complied; and having adjusted the valve, crept back to the car, sick and giddy, but unhurt.

The moon had faded away. There were pale, crimson streaks in what I took to be the eastern sky, and below lay piled up gloomy masses of black cloud, through which gleamed at intervals something white and lustrous, like the marble pinnacles of the cathedral at Milan.

"We're steering straight. Fate, for once, befriends me!" exclaimed the sharer of my journey, "for those are the peaks of the eastern Pyrenees. Throw out ballast! Don't let us ground on them."

We were, in reality, floating among the serrated summits and white, snow-clad cones of the chain of mountains that forms a natural barrier between France and Spain. Below, the sullen cloud-banks menaced elemental war, and already low, muttering growls of thunder reverberated among the ridges beneath us.

"Throw over more ballast!" commanded my ruffianly companion.

I flung out, with some misgivings, the remainder of the last bag of sand and small pebbles, but the *Defiance* did nor rise with its former buoyancy. Much gas had been lost. The once smooth surface of the silk, painted in gaudy stripes of pink and blue, was wrinkled now, and fluttered loosely in irregular festoons. More than once it seemed as though we must be dashed against some one of the towering peaks above which the balloon slowly revolved.

I awoke to find myself lying upon a truckle-bed.

Crash after crash, peal upon peal, rang out the deep diapason of the thunder, echoed from glen to glen and from ridge to ridge, while far and wide the lightning sent its flaming arrows across the darkening sky. How strange it was to see around us those forked shafts of dazzling light, to hear from beneath us those awful rolls of heaven's terrible artillery, and to float helplessly above the raging tempest!

Day had broken; the sun was rising, red and angry, in the stormy eastern sky, and as a current of air wafted the balloon forward, I could dimly distinguish forest and meadow, and spurs of wood-clothed hills, lying to the southward of us. The snowy peaks, rosy-pink in the morning radiance, were being gradually left behind us, as we glided through the air.

"Hurrah!" cried out the galley-slave triumphantly, as he scanned the landscape. "We're well across the frontier now, and Pierre Paul Grincheux is safe from the chain-gang. Thank your stars——"

A stunning peal of thunder cut short his boastful discourse, and as it did so the *Defiance* heeled over, and was driven like a dead leaf before the gale, by the sudden rush of a mighty wind, that bore us almost to the surface of the ground, and hurried us along with headlong rapidity. Fields, woodlands, houses, seemed to pass us with feverish haste, and still we sped onward, so near now to the earth that I momentarily expected that we should become entangled among the trees that loomed so near us.

What was that, like a river of dancing water, on the

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dusty high road beneath us, the yellow road like a ribbon winding amid the rocks and thickets? Troops on the march, no doubt, the sunlight glinting on their bayonets. I could see that as we approached they came confusedly to a halt.

"Again, hurrah!" shouted the galley-slave. "A cheer, noble Spaniard, for your guest, Pierre Paul, now safely——"

As he spoke, I saw the earth very near us, saw the soldiers run to right and left, as though to clear the way for our passage, and then, with a sickening crash, the balloon and the car seemed to strike against a rock, thousands of sparks of fire filled my bewildered eyes, and then all grew dark.

* * * * *

"He'll live, never fear!" said a cheery voice, speaking in Spanish language, which I imperfectly understood, as I awoke to find myself lying upon a truckle-bed in a wayside cottage, surrounded by a group of officers, while a regimental surgeon was feeling my pulse. "Give him a few more drops of the brandy! Only a couple of ribs the worse, I think."

"And—and the man who was with me?" I asked feebly.

The doctor shook his head.

"Not your father or brother, I trust, sir?" he said. "Ah! then, I may tell you that his head was dashed against the rock, and his neck—a tough one, by-the-bye—very effectually dislocated."

And so it was. Casse-tête, who had broken many other heads, had finally broken his own.

Strange to say, my fortune was, to a qualified extent, made by the accident which had so nearly put an end altogether to my worldly anxieties. The kind protectors who had picked me up, a wayworn stranger, with two ribs broken, by the wayside, had conveyed me along with them on a litter to the garrison town of Girona, whither they were bound, and in the military hospital of this place I was cared for until youth and a robust constitution enabled me to get the better of the fever that ensued.

My strange story was noised abroad, and all Barcelona seemed eager to sit for its portrait to the young artist who had visited Spain in so singular a manner. Thence, with good professional recommendations, I passed on to Madrid, Paris and London, and have never since known the actual pressure of want.

I afterwards heard that a subscription set on foot at Marseilles compensated Killick for the loss of his balloon, but he and I never met again. H. Rogerson.

RESULT OF JUMBLED STORY COMPETITION, No. 20.

The first prize of £5 this week goes to Mr. Bernard Parry, 2, Sterndale Road, West Kensington.

Prizes of £1 each have been sent to Miss A. D. Glassy, 17, Rufford Road, Elm Park, Liverpool; Mrs. Hill, 60, New Hey Road, Huddersfield; and Mr. E. G. Crapper, 57, Franklin Street, Derby Street, Salford, Lancs.

The sum of £2 has been sent to Sergeant F. H. Pannell, A. Pay Corps, Omah, Co. Tyrone, Ireland, who tied with the winner of the first prize.

RESULT OF POST-CARD COMPETITION, No. 21.

The London guinea was awarded to Mr. C. H. Morley, 39, Great Tower Street, E.C.; and the Provincial guinea to Mr. W. Bruce, F.C. Manse, Largo, Fife. The miscalculation occurred on page 645, lines 20 and 21—27 hours should have been 14 hours 35 minutes.

AN ELECTRIC EYE,

MORE WONDERFUL THAN THE RÖNTGEN X RAYS,

IS THE TITLE OF ONE OF THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH GO TO MAKE THE

CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER

OF

Pearson's Magazine

A PRODUCTION OF UNRIVALLED INTEREST.

It tells of the marvellous discovery of an Eastern Professor, which outdistances the Röntgen Rays as they outdistance photography. The fame of the ELECTRIC EYE will soon ring through the world. With it we shall see through stone walls and brick-built houses as clearly as we now see through a pane of glass. The Editor of *Pearson's Magazine* has obtained the first account which DR. BOSE—the modern miracle-worker, who has elaborated the ELECTRIC EYE—has allowed to be published. The contribution is no fairy tale. DR. BOSE'S achievements are regarded with amazement by the foremost scientists of the day. LORD KELVIN, for example, writes of them:

"I have seen enough to fill me literally with wonder and admiration."

ONE SHILLING A WORD

is the unprecedentedly high rate at which MR. RUDYARD KIPLING has been paid for the serial story which he calls "CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS." It appears in this country exclusively in *Pearson's Magazine*, and the first instalment of 10,000 words (£500 worth!) forms part of *THE CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*, which is now on sale.

Among the other Stories and Articles which go to make up this number are:

Some Royal Artists. JOYCE GARRAWAY.
Illustrated with examples of their work.

The Mystery of Sada Sukh. (COMPLETE STORY.) MAYNE LINDSAY.
Illustrated by WARWICK GOBLE.

The English Trappists. T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.
Illustrated by S. NATION and with photographs.

The Bohemian Club. Written and Illustrated by HARRY FURNISS.

The Brown Man's Servant. (COMPLETE STORY.) W. W. JACOBS.
Illustrated by E. F. SHERIE.

Some Triumphs of Fancy Dress. J. MALCOLM FRASER.
With illustrations from the original designs.

The White Slaves of England. R. H. SHERARD.
No. VI.—THE WOOL COMBERS. Illustrated by H. PIFFARD.

The Queen's Hobby. DUDLEY HEATH.
Illustrated from photographs of the original Miniatures graciously supplied by Her Majesty the Queen, and from sketches by the Author.

The Capture of a Duke. (COMPLETE STORY.) F. FRANKFORT MOORE.
Illustrated by R. SAUBER, R.B.A.

Secrets of the Courts of Europe. ALLEN UPWARD.
Second Series.—No. VI. "MADAME THE AMBASSADRESS."
Illustrated by HAL HURST, R.B.A.

Wisdom Let Loose. Illustrated by CHARLES MAY. W. L. ALDEN.

The Moon Child. (COMPLETE STORY.) W. BERT FOSTER.
Illustrated by H. PIFFARD.

Aerial Railways. W. ARTHUR WOODWARD

WE HATE TO BOAST

of a COLOURED PLATE now when so many are, or are about to be, before the public, but a Chromo-Lithographic Picture, which forms part of *THE CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*, is stated by competent judges who have seen it to be the finest piece of colour printing which has ever been turned out in England. The work is so good that it might be French—and higher praise than that cannot be bestowed upon colour printing—but it is done by an English firm.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE. Price One Shilling

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THE DECISION OF CLYDE.

WHEN Brooke Clyde found himself in love with a woman whom he had no desire to marry, he wisely packed up his paint brushes and general utility clothes and fled her presence.

It was easier to do this because it was June, and the streets of the city were hot, and spoke with dusty throats of greenness and freshness elsewhere. The woman, for her part, took his desertion lightly. She had loved many times, but not much.

She had perennial consolation within herself, the forces of her nature finding vent sometimes in experimental romance, sometimes in a kind of intellectual greed.

A volume of clever stories, which had come in the same post, overshadowed Clyde's note of farewell.

He went to the seaside, and tried to convince himself that a world of women was not worth one glimpse of the ocean melting into the sky. He sought to put his soul—he knew he had one—into certain shades and combinations of blues and greys and greens.

So much for the artist.

The man was restless.

"That woman has force enough to upset my life, but not force enough to steady it," he said to himself, half angry because she looked at him from his canvas and obscured the picture that was forming there.

"I will write to her," he thought, piqued by some conjecture that she might not be taking his absence seriously. "That will impress her." A few days later he had an adventure. Then he said: "Now I have an excuse for writing—about another woman."

This is what he wrote:

"The church is noted hereabouts. It is old enough to be a part of the soil on which it stands. It is ivy-covered, of course. The sea wind rushes through its belfry and stirs its ancient bell. Its door is always open, to invite the worshipper—who never comes. Only artists come, and they say no prayers. Its altar is fresh with flowers—she places them there. An image of Christ is in the east window. He walks upon the sea, with one hand outstretched to save those whom the great depth might swallow up. I tell you of the church, because the church explains the verger's daughter.

"I wonder if you, a woman of the world, could understand this girl? Her father, as I found, actually a gentleman, who cast away Heaven knows what wrecks of a past life to hide himself in a verger's gown. The aroma of experience in a larger world still clings to him. I hoped that the secret might escape from between the covers of the books in his library. But no more of him. It is a shadowy paternity, fitting a girl who lives in the shadows.

"She is all faith, and no experience. The sea has moulded her thoughts, and the church has coloured her emotions. When I first saw her, she was placing flowers from her garden, a step beyond the mouldy tombstones, on the altar. There was something mediæval in the devoutness of the act.

"'Here is pure Gothic embodied,' I said, as I watched her, looking up furtively from my drawing of the chancel. Later I saw her swimming in the ocean—joy and energy in every limb, and was glad that the impression of the morning was partially wiped out. Hope she may not escape from this world until she has tasted some of its fierce joys. Maybe, one day, when the summer sun lies hot and golden on her flower-beds, she will feel the blood dance in her veins, and say with the Lady of Shalot, 'I am half sick of shadows.'

"Then she will put the flowers in her hair, instead of on the altar, and find out that she is very, very beautiful."

The Woman of the World answered in three lines:

"You are poetical. Tell me more about this girl whose face pleases you. Have you spoken with her, or is speech sacrilege?"

He wrote again:

"I speak with her daily. She listens and answers me through organ notes. I sit in the church while she makes music, always with its undertone of immaturity. Sometimes I sketch her, now as St. Cecilia, now as a sea syren. As the latter she is always a failure. Her face is innocent of the syren. She will never know how to make a man love her, unless I teach her."

The Woman of the World frowned over this last sentence.

She answered immediately:

"I do not wish to overvalue or undervalue your talents as a schoolmaster, but I know that one half-god can represent Olympus to a girl who knows her prayer-book better than she knows men. Let her be, and come back to that much misunderstood sisterhood, Women of the World. You will only disturb her, and then go away, while she, she stays—that kind of woman always stays—in the old places vocal with his voice and warm with his presence, and she tries to comfort herself with these ghosts of light and sound, until she becomes dyspeptic from over-much dreaming and too little healthy appetite for her actual surroundings.

"Remember, I love the verger's daughter so much that I dare say to you that you could never make her happy."

"But she can make me happy," he answered, "which is more to the point. Only think! she had never heard of Ibsen or of 'Christian Science,' though she reads both Greek and Latin, and loves her Shakespeare and her Milton.

"You need not be disturbed. My teachings are purely intellectual—addressed with austere singleness of purpose to the child's mind, which is highly sensitive, and utterly uncramped by that strait-jacket—modern education. She knew nothing of the modern warfare between science and religion Now she looks embarrassed when the service is read of a Sunday, where before she looked devout.

"I told her of you one day, and of your clever article

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in the *Exodus Quarterly* on the connection between miracles and superstition. She was curious to know more about you, and I noticed that she laid more stress on your personal charms than on your intellectual qualities. When I had carefully given her a synopsis of that more than happy article of yours, she said:

"'Is she pretty?'

"What does that mean?"

The Women of the World wrote thus:

"When she is no longer the verger's daughter, with a prayer in her eyes and Gregorian chant music in her finger-tips, you will cease to care for her. How like a man! to kill the charm for love of the butchery. Why make her like us? If we no longer see visions and dream dreams, why should you turn the electric light on her simple faith? I am ashamed of you, Brooke Clyde!"

He did not answer her letter for several weeks. Then he wrote:

"Since you found fault with one kind of schooling, I tried another, more to test my powers of—hypnotism, you would call it, than to build up a romance. I have succeeded in making the girl love me, not by making love to her, oh no! that is a very old-fashioned and clumsy method, but by simply bringing into prominence everything in my character that would be mystifying or unintelligible to her—the mysterious is always fascinating—so I turned myself into a sealed book which might hold a fairy tale or a philosophical treatise between the non-committal covers.

"The result justified the sweet reasonableness of the method.

"Of course she says nothing, but the child is alabaster—to be trite, all the love-light of her heart shines through her face. She never looks at the altar now, only at me, a poor but more human substitute for her devotion.

"We were in the churchyard at sunset, standing near the west door of the church with its sombre frame of ivy. She was in white, and the sun had somehow stolen into her hair, and into the diaphanous folds of her dress, and the light seemed to come from her, herself.

"I asked her to stand just so, against the black oak door, while I sketched her. She did as she was told, with that sweet obedience to my every wish which sometimes charms me, and sometimes makes me impatient—and while she stood there, swaying a little, like a flower when the air stirs, I told her an old German story of a knight who loved a lady, plighted his truth with her, and then rode away to the wars with her token on his breast.

"The war burns itself out, and after many years he comes riding wearily home, her token still on his breast, and a doubt like a snake in his heart lest she should not have remained faithful. Suddenly he sees her by the roadside, straining her eyes to catch the first glimpse of her beloved. She does not recognise him, and before he can call her name she cries out for news of her lover. To test her to the utmost, he replies that he was not slain, but is alive and well indeed, having married a women in the foreign country.

"'God bless him, whatever he has done,' cries the mediæval lady.

"I can hear you say 'Poor fool—a German *Hausfrau*,' but the child's eyes suddenly became the home of all the love and romance in the world, and she said, with a tremble in her voice:

"'How privileged she was to have such a test!'

"An ugly imp of irritation suddenly took possession of me. I put aside the sketch, and haven't yet finished it. I could have heaven for the asking, and yet I am ungrateful.

"As she said 'Good-night,' she looked at me with an all-unfolding look of love. How the gods work us mortals!"

Her next letter came promptly:

"This place is looking wonderfully well for the last of July, and justifies its reputation as a monstrous seaside resort. The park is still green as emerald, the libraries are full of cool, pensive shadows, the strangers in town are worth studying. By-the-way, I've formed a summer saloon of choice spirits, who meet of evenings to drink lemonade and claret, and incidentally to bare their souls to each other in a new sonnet or an unpublished sonata. We invoke the Muses till twelve, and then steal home with a delicious sense of having a great city to ourselves just because some acknowledged peers are out of it. No, a notable exception, Bayard Keith arrived last week from Italy. He is even more entertaining than his new book, which promises to be his best. He is reading it to me. We look forward to welcoming you back in October."

He answered her letter with a telegram:

"Will arrive in town Thursday afternoon. Must see you Thursday evening."

The Woman of the World awaited his coming in her parlour. The room without her would have been eloquent of the many elements which make up the artistic side of life in a great social centre. As it was, it faded into a quiet background for her. She seemed to absorb and express its charm.

His telegram lay on the table. The imperative "must" had told her the whole story in its past, present, and future tense.

When he came she welcomed him as if he had parted from her the day before. She began a conversation innocent of subtleties. He was uneasy under it, and broke in upon her flow of words at last, as if he did not hear them.

"You do not ask me why I left my sea-shore paradise and hurried back to town on the crest of a hot wave."

"I am never curious about people's motives," she said. "They are too much a part of character ever to be perfectly understood, and artists are privileged creatures. They are not obliged to have motives."

"I have a motive—the strongest of my life," he answered curtly. He was looking at her from under half-lowered eyelids, and was thinking that he had made a most judicious decision, a kind of precious crystal evolved from the hot jealousy provoked by her last letter. Her indifference, her languid attitude, the studied intellectual beauty of her evening gown, seemed fine wine to him after too long a draught of spring water.

"The strongest motive of my life," he repeated. "I love you, you only! I ask you to be my wife."

She looked a courteous interest in what he said, as if it concerned anyone but herself.

"You do not answer me. I did not think you the woman to enjoy entreaties."

"You are right in that. You shall have your answer. I cannot marry you."

"And why not?"

"I would never marry a man who preferred me to a verger's daughter."

Anna McClure Sholl.

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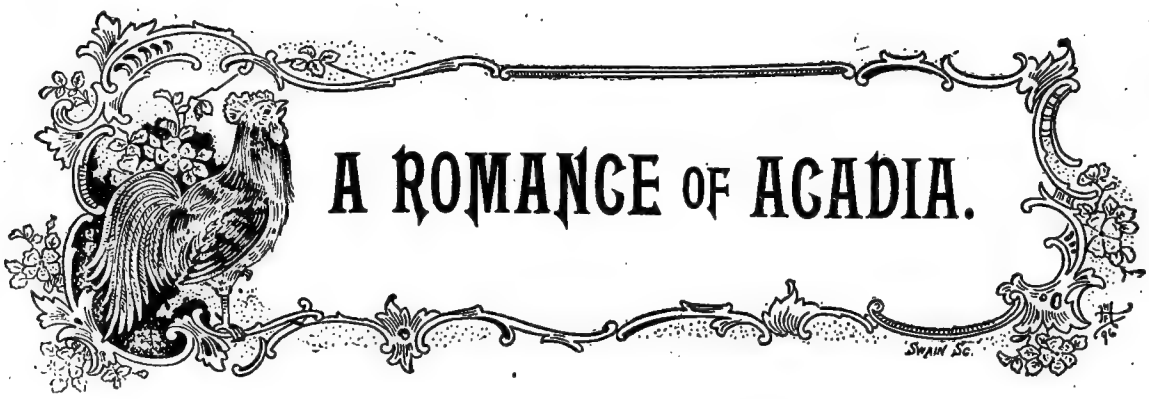

A ROMANCE OF ACADIA.

THERE is a village on a point of land in Acadia that runs out between two bodies of water. On one side is the harbour, called, like the settlement itself, Leboncoup; on the other, the bay, which flows from the ocean past the point for many miles, and is dotted throughout its length with more than three hundred fir-clad islands. This was appropriately called by the French, Baie des Iles, which in English speech became corrupted into Eel Bay, as it is now known.

Two years after the expulsion from Grand Prè, the French settlers were driven from this point and carried, like the exiles from the valley, to the neighbouring colonies, whence they returned twelve years later to the sterile point which had been their home. Here they found the clearings made by their fathers at the head and east side of their pretty harbour adopted by English settlers, and they gathered upon the unbroken, forest-clad west shore to begin a third Leboncoup, which should be purely French Acadian. All this happened a hundred and twenty-five years ago, and now the descendants of these people are living on the point, having preserved their tongue, faith and traditions, and the waters of bay and harbour wash a singular remnant of Acadian life.

In the doorway of a house overlooking the harbour a young girl stood shading her eyes from the rays of the setting sun. It was Saturday afternoon, and the fishing smacks, with their sails all set to catch the most of the light breeze, were coming up the harbour, for the fishermen returned regularly for their Sunday Mass-going, and to get bait for the next week's cod-fishing.

The girl in the doorway watched their coming with a face which the sunlight could not brighten, so glad a look rested on the soft lips and wide brown eyes. It was a face of the real Acadian type; oval in contour, chin small, lips full and sweet, nose straight, with fine, quivering nostrils; complexion which the frequent fogs made like the inside of a shell, and under a low brow and clearly defined eye brows large eyes of hazel brown, drooping in the outer corners, the whole framed in glossy dark brown hair. This was Colombe Pellerin, whose father, drowned at sea, had descended from one of the three families who had populated Leboncoup, and whose names had supplanted all others in the settlement, so that there was none but Theriaults, Pellerins, and De Villiers in the place—the De Villiers far predominating.

In the simple life of this little village there is no inequality, and there was no suggestion of degradation in Colombe's going, at the death of her father, to help her mother and the numberless younger children, by serving as maid and companion to the widow De Villier, whose only daughter was dead, and with whom the young girl worked with no thought on either side of the difference implied elsewhere by the terms "maid" and "mistress."

As she stood watching the coming of the fishing boats, the widow De Villier—called Mrs. Amand to distinguish her from all the others of the same name—came up behind the girl, and, laying a hand on either casement of the door, peered over her shoulder to see how near the boats had come. Her thin face and dark eyes looked content, but though her son was on the boat that led the others, she had none of the rapture of expression which lit up Colombe's face. To her the weekly return had become a matter of custom, and though always a thing to rejoice over, had lost the wonder of the miracle of bliss it had been in her youth, when love was new, and hard work had not made her angular and thin.

She laid her hand on Colombe's shoulder, pointed outward without speaking, and nodded pleasantly. The girl turned in an irrepressible rapture, waved her hands, palms outwards, with a graceful motion towards the water, and, lifting Mrs. Amand's hand from her shoulder, kissed it twice passionately. It was only in this pantomime that one learned that she was deaf and dumb.

An hour later Colombe knelt before the kitchen fire, coaxing the reluctant sticks to kindle. The room was very clean, the floor covered with sail-cloth, painted by skilful hands in figures to represent oil-cloth. Dark wooden chairs were ranged against the wall upon which hung pictures of the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary, that even when at work the women might not quite forget Heavenly matters.

A young man in a rough woollen shirt, weather-stained trousers, and battered hat, had entered; the girl's sealed senses could not welcome his presence, but an added sense supplied her lack. She felt his coming, and springing to her feet, darted forward, grasping his hands in a rapture which needed no speech for expression.

Toussaint de Villier was young, and the joy of the fair face so near his, born of happiness at his return, could not be displeasing.

He bent towards her his comely face, and putting his arm gently round her would have kissed her, but she drew back. The conventionality which taught other maidens to conceal their delight at such returns could never be conveyed to the deaf and dumb girl, but the instinct of maidenhood needed no teaching, and she shrank from his embrace while she fondled his hand.

Toussaint did not press her; fair as she was, he felt only a manly tenderness for his mother's good little

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silent helper, and his mind was very full of his own affairs. Withdrawing his hand with a kindly pat on the girl's dark hair, he went into the little bedroom off the kitchen, whence he presently issued, resplendent in best clothes, and the week's growth removed from his bronzed young face.

Tea was a short meal, and while Colombe and Mrs. Amand gathered up the dishes, Toussaint went out to join the group of men that had collected on the steps of the tiny shop opposite, where on Saturday and Sunday nights the entire male portion of the village assembled to discuss the week's fishing, and the prospects for the coming six days' haul.

By eight o'clock the group had dispersed; the admiring fringe of small boys which surrounded it had gone to bed, the older men had returned to their firesides, and the younger had gone to seek those who would one day preside over theirs.

The widow Amand glanced from time to time at Colombe's happy face. Toussaint, she well knew, had gone to see the pretty Odelle Theriault, whom his mother would gladly welcome in her dead daughter's place—but Colombe! Better than Toussaint, in his selfish happiness, Mrs. Amand knew that love had found its way into the secluded soul of the deaf and dumb girl. She knew, too, that she lacked the self-knowledge that could tell her what its coming meant, and without experience of books or men, had not yet felt jealousy; what would the rude awakening that lay before her bring to Colombe?

The elder women of Leboncoup are thin and lank, not unlike the prevailing firs—the effect in both cases of bleak climate, sharp winds, and sterile land; but in the worn bodies beat kindly hearts.

Mrs. Amand arose and laid her hand gently on the shoulder of the brooding girl, breaking into her happy reverie with the signal for bed.

Colombe obeyed with the ready docility she always showed, and except that the door was left ajar for Toussaint, the house was soon settled for the night.

The next day was, in the parlance of Leboncoup, "East-side Sunday." This means that on that day the priest, whose parish extends for sixty miles, would go to say Mass on the other side of the harbour, whither, as the tide served, a large portion of his west-side parishioners would follow him. At half-past nine the harbour was dotted with the white sails of the little crafts, prettily varied by the Venetian effects of those sloops, the sails of which are painted orange or red, all winding picturesquely through the dark islands, in their solemn fir and spruce growth, the blue of the water and the peculiarly clear air of this northern land giving the brilliancy that completed the picture.

Toussaint de Villier sat with his mother in the stern of a small boat, his face full of repressed, excited joy as he steered. In the bow, alone, sat Colombe; alone as no one else in the little community should ever be; wrapped in her unbroken silence like a consecration. Her eyes were dreamy, her lips smiling, and the fresh breeze ruffled her hair into little rings upon her flushing cheeks. No one could guess what the Mass-going meant to Colombe; no one could ever conjecture that anything in life meant to her to make her first communion like the other girls, doubly unlike them though she was through the difficulty in instructing her, and her innocence which knew no taint.

Toussaint, with his hand on the tiller and his eyes carefully ahead over the water, spoke, his dark cheek flushing. They used a *patois* French, at once a corruption and preservation of the French of two centuries ago.

"I spoke to Odelle last night, mother, and we settled it. We shall be married in September, after the fishing." His mother glanced hastily at Colombe; the sunshine rested on her happy face and Mrs. Amand lowered her voice, though no sound could pain her.

"Ah, poor Colombe," she whispered.

"Colombe!" exclaimed Toussaint. "What o Colombe? She never thought to marry me."

"She never thought at all. What does she know of your plans? But she can feel," answered his mother.

"Ah, well, she likes Odelle; she will be happy with us. She expects nothing better, a girl like that," said Toussaint easily.

"A girl like that is a girl like this," responded his mother. "But if she could hear, we would not discuss her; let us not now. My poor little tender one," she added, in spite of herself.

"Oh, Colombe! Colombe!" exclaimed Toussaint pettishly. "Odelle is the question. She will come home to supper to-night. Are you sorry to have me marry her? I thought you would be delighted, and now you talk of Colombe."

"I am very glad to have you marry her. She is the wife I should have chosen for you," said his mother, and they shook hands gravely. Colombe looked up, and seeing the movement, nodded gaily, and, rising, took a hand of each, and shook it merrily. Even Toussaint looked disconcerted for the moment, but seeing Odelle upon the wharf forgot Colombe in nodding to her. But Mrs. Amand's eyes were so dim that she needed Colombe's guiding hand as she climbed the steps.

The little fleet sailed back on the afternoon tide after vespers, and Odelle came to take tea in her future home. She was a pretty girl, and she looked very sweet in her happiness, which lent a grace to her every movement. Toussaint hovered about her, and Colombe sat forgotten by all but Mrs. Amand, who thought best to seem to forget her, too, as she saw in stolen glances the growing trouble in her face.

Odelle went away early to gain a longer time alone with Toussaint, who would start in the dawn for another week's fishing, and a lovers' eternity of separation.

When they were gone, Colombe came swiftly forth from the corner where she had watched Toussaint fold Odelle's cape about her with a tenderness that she had never seen in him, and which had made her cold and trembling with her first uncomprehended agony. Seizing the widow's hand in her shaking ones, she mutely asked the meaning of what she had seen. Words could have added nothing to the passion of her entreaty, and Mrs. Amand met her with the truth it deserved.

"*Oui*," she said aloud, forgetting her interlocutor's deafness. "*Oui, ma pauvre petite, il l'aime; nous t'aimons itou (aussi)*." Colombe understood, if not the words, the manner. Stretching out her hands in supplication to know all, she waited.

By gestures Mrs. Amand told her that Toussaint loved Odelle. Lifting the leaves of the calendar, she showed her the three months that intervened before the day when Odelle should come, and the capacity in which she would come she explained by leading poor Colombe into the adjoining bedroom—Toussaint's. Colombe stood quivering for a moment, trying to grasp this new thing, which was life and yet agony to her to whom hitherto life had meant joy and peace. Then she threw herself upon the floor beside the bed in a passion of weeping, more dreadful than it was inarticulate.

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The great festival of the year was approaching—the church picnic, at which the country assembled for an area of thirty miles. During the three weeks preceding it Colombe crept about her duties, the shadow of herself. A grey mask seemed to have settled upon her sunny face, out of which her brown eyes looked with the helpless expression seen sometimes in dogs. She carefully avoided the window, Mrs. Amand knew, lest she should see Odelle passing.

The day of the picnic was bright and clear; the frequent fogs did not gather at its close. A great Ferris wheel was raised on the grounds, and targets for shooting, booths for food, booths for the sale of fancy articles; for the picnic was a curious mixture of bazaar and country fête. A covered platform for dancing was the most important feature, where, upon a stand at one end, the men who could play upon the fiddle or triangle took turns in furnishing the music for quadrilles and "country eights."

The fishing boats did not go out that Monday, the day purposely chosen that the men might have a chance to stay at home for the picnic, and all day the crowd round the stand waiting for a chance to dance was considerable. Colombe stood among them watching the quadrilles listlessly. Odelle had not yet arrived, and Toussaint was not dancing. No one but these two and Mrs. Amand guessed the girl's secret, and many commented with wonder upon her altered looks.

Suddenly Toussaint's face brightened, and he started forward. Colombe followed him with her eyes, saw Odelle, and set her teeth with a look not pleasant to see. The young lovers took their place in the set forming, and Colombe watched them with an expression her childish face had never worn, and which many noted with sudden enlightenment as to the change in her.

It all happened in a moment after that. Toussaint took his partner in his arms to turn. Odelle stepped back into place, and Colombe sprang on her like a panther, bore her to the ground, and began an assault that might have ended tragically, had not Toussaint, recovering from his surprise, thrown her off, and lifted Odelle from the floor. The music ceased in confusion, a dozen hands were laid on Colombe, who remained quite still, except for the sobs which shook her slight body.

Odelle interposed between her and the gathering crowd.

"Leave her to me," she said. "She was crazy for a moment, and could bear no more. She will be her own gentle self again. Poor Colombe! Toussaint, lift her, forgive her."

"Forgive her! Never," said the young man wrathfully. "The treacherous cat! I will not forgive her now or ever."

Odelle bent over the girl, and softly stroked her hair.

"For shame, when we are so happy," she said reproachfully. "She was mad, I tell you. She has no help in her dull misery. Who can wonder if it broke bounds."

As if to verify her words, Colombe raised her head, and turned to Odelle a face so heartbroken that the bystanders burst into involuntary exclamations of pity, and clasped Odelle's dress in mute imploring for pardon.

Odelle stooped and kissed her, but when Colombe turned to Toussaint he moved away, muttering between his teeth that he could not forget her face as she sprang on the girl he loved, and that, while he remembered it, forgiveness was out of the question.

The two months that intervened between the picnic and the marriage of Odelle Theriault and Toussaint de Villier were filled for Leboncoup by interest in the little tragedy enacted in the widow Amand's house. The village, among its virtues, shared the vice common to all places where larger interests are wanted, of a lively concern as to others' affairs, and it was only natural that tongues were busy over the unhappy fate of Colombe. In the one outbreak of her life the passion that had turned her sweetness into bitterness had been vented, and those who had condemned her at first ended by accepting the theory of a temporary insanity of grief, and pitied her.

No one would have known her for the bright creature who had watched the boats come home in the June sunshine a few weeks before. All colour had faded from her cheeks, her step was slow, her form drooping; she never smiled, but went about her tasks in patient apathy, which touched all hearts. All but one, for whose mercy she vainly pleaded with all the eloquence of her speechlessness. Toussaint, who she followed with heartbroken eyes, Toussaint alone withheld the forgiving smile she craved. And so the week before the wedding came, and Colombe was eager in her efforts to make the house ready for Toussaint's bride, for he was the youngest son, and, according to the Leboncoup custom, to him as such belonged the right of bringing his wife to the paternal roof.

She had followed Odelle with imploring meekness and every sign of sorrow from the day of the picnic, and the happier girl had done all in her power to lighten the lot of her to whom she had brought pain.

In response to Colombe's appeal to be allowed to help in her preparations, she had given her the wedding veil to hem, and had insisted that Colombe alone should be her bridesmaid.

It was to her entreaties, and to the necessity of forgiving all wrongs before the marriage sacraments, that Colombe owed at last Toussaint's pardon, accorded as a good-night benediction on the eve of the marriage. When the girl saw him coming towards her with a half smile for the first time in so many weeks, she went to meet him and knelt suddenly at his feet. Toussaint extended his hand. Instead, she bent her head beneath it, and laid her cheek tenderly for a moment on his foot. Then she raised her face, trembling but tearless, and with a smile of strange brightness, signified that not then, but to-morrow he would truly forgive poor Colombe. And they wondered later if her life, sinless, except for her one bitterly repented fault, had won for her the right to hear with her sealed ears the rush of coming events and her silent lips to prophesy.

The wedding day was fair, with piled up clouds in the west that betokened the coming of wind. The nuptial mass was early, but from far and wide everyone came to see the marriage about which so much interest had gathered. Pretty as the bride was in her simple gown of rose-coloured cashmere and soft tulle veil, all eyes were turned on the bridesmaid, whose face was as white as her snowy dress, and whose eyes shone with strange lustre under her dark hair, as she walked as one set apart to some great purpose, or so they said later when they recalled her face, and interpreted her look by the light of subsequent knowledge.

According to the customs of the village, one meal of the day was eaten under the groom's roof, another under the bride's. As Odelle lived on the east side, the wedding breakfast, more probably dinner, was given at Mrs. Amand's, whence the bridal pair would go to take supper and spend the night in Odelle's maiden home. Old

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Nicholas Theriault, the fiddler, had come, and, dinner over, dancing began, where everyone claimed the honour of dancing with the bride. Pretty Odelle, flushed and gay, was glad to rest when the summons came for her to make ready for the sail across the harbour for the early supper, and to meet the friends who awaited her on the other side.

During the dancing Colombe had been absent. She had sat through dinner, not eating, but calm, with the same uplifted look upon her white face which it had worn in the church, and had immediately retired to the solitude of her room, whither many thoughts followed her with loving pity. Now in her capacity of bridesmaid she was to accompany Odelle across the harbour, she and Louis de Villier, Toussaint's cousin and best man. Odelle came down soon, with a dark cloak covering her rose-coloured gown, but Colombe lingered.

At last she came, stepping loiteringly down the stairs, still in her thin white dress, though the wind had risen.

As they saw her face, an involuntary exclamation broke from the guests who had gathered at the foot of the stairs to wish the bride God-speed, and an old woman crossed herself, as she drew tighter the black silk kerchief worn after the manner of Acadians in place of bonnet, saying:

"*Mon Dieu, elle voit les anges.*"

Colombe's mother, softly crying, and Mrs. Amand pressed forward to the girl, lifting her thin dress protestingly, signifying that it was growing cold. But Colombe shook her head smilingly, spreading wide her arms.

Then she clasped her mother's face and Mrs. Amand's in turn in her hands, kissed them each, and turned again to kiss Mrs. Amand, pointing to Toussaint waiting outside.

"*Dépêche-toi, dépêche-toi,*" he cried, turning at that moment and beckoning, and Colombe hastened to obey.

The bridal party went on board the little boat that awaited them at the wharf. Louis de Villier sat far forward in the bow, Colombe on the side, Toussaint and his wife in the stern. The wind blew in puffs, and the sky was darkening. Odelle shivered as Toussaint wrapped her cloak about her, but Colombe looked straight over the water with the gaze of one who felt neither cold nor heat.

It was in the channel, half way across, that the squall struck them. It was the work of a moment. The boat careened, then jibbed; the young bride, wrapped in her cloak, the heavy folds of which made her helpless, was swept into the water. She fainted and sank at once, when a white figure plunged after her, seized her as she rose, and held her up. It was Colombe, and she could not swim.

"Quick, Louis: take her," cried Toussaint madly, for the girls rose near the bow and he could not reach them.

But when Louis leant over to take Odelle, Colombe motioned him away, and pointing to Toussaint, sank with her burden.

Toussaint, with a dreadful oath, cursed her as a murderess; but in a moment they rose again. Colombe struggling to support the unconscious Odelle, and this time it was Toussaint who leaned out to seize her.

With a supreme effort Colombe raised Odelle and placed her in her husband's arms, and both men saw the bright smile with which she did so. Then she folded her arms upon her breast, and sank for ever.

In vain they hovered round the spot, and the boats from shore, bringing those who had seen the accident, came to their assistance. Colombe did not rise again, and in the last rays of the setting sun a sorrowful wedding party sailed silently to shore.

There could be no sleep that night, and everyone sat through the long hours, talking softly of the sweet dove's innocent life and tragic end.

Odelle sobbed on her husband's breast, seeking the comfort he could not give, as he remembered the pardon he had withheld from the dead girl, the price she had paid to win it, and read at last the meaning of her dying smile.

It was early in the dawn when they went once more to the shore of the little harbour, hoping that the incoming tide had brought them that which they had sought in vain.

And the kindly waters had done their work, for, white and still in the grey light, her dark hair clinging to her cheeks, her lips smiling with her last thought that now Toussaint would look gently on her, among the soft green grass lay Colombe Pellerin.

H. P. Rogers.

"An American Emperor."

A NEW STORY BY MR. LOUIS TRACY.

Those readers of ***Short Stories*** who read Mr. Louis Tracy's "Final War" when it ran as a serial through ***Pearson's Weekly*** will be delighted to hear that we have secured another story from his pen. This will commence in the Christmas Week Number of ***P. W.***, published on December 19th.

Mr. Tracy's second story is even more dramatic, more entertaining—more sensational, shall we say!—than his first. He has taken a daring plot, and daringly treated it. The story is called—

"AN AMERICAN EMPEROR."

THE STORY OF THE FOURTH EMPIRE OF FRANCE.

Jerome K. Vansittart is the richest man in the world, a young man, a man with an iron will, a man with high principles. He is at the opera, and falls violently in love with a lady in the opposite box.

How he gets an introduction to this lady would spoil the story to tell. Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier, however, is a lineal descendant of two lines of French kings, and will not marry Vansittart because she considers herself committed by Fate to re-establish the Monarchy or die unwed. A man will do anything to gain the woman he loves, as we know, so Jerome K. Vansittart decides to be a king.

It would be unfair to spoil the reader's pleasure by detailing more of this delightful narrative here.

If he would read one of the most entrancing stories ever written he must commence it in the Christmas Week Number of ***Pearson's Weekly.*** There we shall give a very large first instalment, so that the reader can get an interest in the story at once.

Remember,

"AN AMERICAN EMPEROR"

Will commence in the Christmas Week Number of ***Pearson's Weekly,*** published on December 19th.

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Or, THE ROMANCE OF A LOST CONTINENT.

By Geo. C. Wallis, Author of *"The Winning of Gunhild,"* etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Last Great Fight.

Scarcely two hours had gone since dawn when the rebels, by that time, doubtless, of their full strength, moved forward to the attack in jubilant array, thinking nothing but that we should fall easy victims to their overpowering numbers.

The ground we had chosen for our stand was a gently sloping plain, dipping down from a grassy knoll in our rear to a marshy tract right across our van, and thence rising again towards the hilly country beyond, which opened out straight in front of us in a wide, well-wooded ravine. On our left was the silent town, with its four-terraced, flat-topped pyramid—strange monument of Atlantian rule, towering above the empty houses. To the right a stream, narrow, but deep there, came from the hills, bubbling between its fern-fringed banks as it passed on its way to waste its eager flood in the saturated stretch of mossy, weedy marsh in the hollow below. It was an excellent position to await an enemy's attack, the more so as the enemy approached only from the front, and must force the passage of the marsh while at the mercy of our missiles. To take full advantage of the natural benefits of such a situation, I placed my men thuswise.

In our rear, on the slope of the little hillock, I stationed wary old Cuzcon, with five thousand picked veterans, all good swordsmen, as a reserve force. Their duty it was to guard the stores and camp followers until the tide of war wavered, and then to turn it in our favour by a headlong rush. In front, all along the edge of the swampy ground, I placed my two best regiments of archers and slingers, each five thousand strong, myself their captain; and between these and the reserve, Marenso with ten thousand spears and lances waited for the struggle when it should surge across the low level. On the left, Atris occupied the outskirts of the town with another ten thousand men, while Valdo, with an equal number, lined the banks of the rushing stream to the right.

The enemy advanced with little attempt at order, trusting more to overpowering odds than disposition of their forces, or previous instruction. In the middle of the army, as it poured down the gorge in their rear, came forty thousand renegade Atlantian soldiers and settlers; all the manhood that remained of our once great colony, now that many had landed to help the Prince of Aidè, and never returned, now that the savages, after years of subjection, had carried fire and sword through all the country, until the Governor had perforce made alliance with them to save alive the few who were left, and to raise the flag of revolt.

On the right wing, as they neared us, and spread out on the slope, came a yelling crowd of Huacans, marshalled under their own various banners and many-coloured ensigns, nearly twice as numerous as their white allies; and on the left wing a still larger force of Ulmecs, a sterner race than their kindred redskins, better disciplined, and more cunning in their tactics, a race of barbarians but lately from the wild region of the north. In the front rank, armour-clad, I saw with grim joy Vichri and Sothi stalking together with one whom some of my soldiers pointed out as Quitzaal, a fine, tall man with long grey beard, and another of lighter form and lither figure, more resplendently attired than the rest, whom no one in our army knew. Also, when their first line reached the sedges of the swamp I recognised the Prince of Aidè leading a party of swordsmen to the left flank, the white-crossed banner of blue that the rebels followed being borne before him. Of these they had several; in all our army there was one only, which I kept near myself, a torn and tattered rag, arrow-pierced, sword-cut, blood-stained, rain-soiled, but still streaming defiantly in the eastern breeze, the same brave flag of gold with the fiery sun upon it, that has floated over the conquering armies of Atlantis for more than a thousand years.

On came the vast array, surging like the sea in its resistless might, on, till the foremost files set foot in the treacherous marsh and sank at each step lower and lower, till they strode breast high through rushes and slimy water, struggling desperately to keep footing in face of the ceaseless shower of missiles that we discharged upon them with deadly effect.

Then those men in the rear brought hastily bound faggots from the forest, and piled them thick in the path to make a secure roadway across, but slow work they found it, with our arrows and bullets raining down upon them in a pitiless storm, pinning men to their own faggots, hurling them over into the black, thick ooze, and building up a causeway of writhing human flesh, more quickly than one of timber. Meantime, most of the Huacans, sweeping round, had fallen on our left, keeping Atris full-handed, while the crafty Ulmecs, creeping up through the bushes on our right, were engaging Valdo's flank with stubborn perseverance across the rivulet, slowly but surely pressing their way inwards and upwards. Seeing the danger of neglecting them, I bade the men in my command turn their volleying upon each flank into the swarms of barbarians, and let the rebels in front gain their way across the marsh if they could do so. That order obeyed, the causeway of faggots grew, though slowly and wearily, whilst the storm of missiles, diverted outwards, for a moment checked the savage advance. For a moment only, though, for, recovering from their first dismay, the teeming hosts pressed on again, throwing themselves headlong, heedless, reckless, upon our thin and faltering lines, dying by thousands as they came, yet those behind forcing on the front

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ranks with resistless impetus. Atris, indeed, continued to hold his own well; the nature of the ground was there more difficult for the attack, many of the outlying buildings of the town affording protection to the marksmen, also the Huacans had already tasted defeat at our hands, and were cautious of risking it again.

But the Ulmecs who were besetting Valdo so severely were a fiercer race, as yet unbeaten by our armies, and in greater number, so that it is no cause for wonder that after withstanding the terrible onslaught of the yelling horde with unparalleled devotion for three long hours, our right wing gave back a space, allowing the enemy to cross the stream, wavered under the renewed attack, and finally broke its ranks, falling in disordered array upon our centre, the triumphant barbarians pouring after in a countless host.

I hastened to Valdo's aid at once with my five thousand slingers, and rallying the shattered lines at last, made good another stand, presenting a yieldless front to the eager foes, who dashed themselves in maddened rage upon our solid ranks as the billows of an angry sea dash and break upon a rocky shore. At this juncture old Cuzcon sent down a thousand of his hardy veterans, taking the Ulmecs in flank and cutting through their crippled companies like a living spear as they tore along with splendid coolness till they reached our men. I had no fear of the right wing, then, and hastened down to the front, where Marenso stood calmly waiting the onset of the rebels, sending off a thousand archers to aid Atris as I went.

He uttered a fearful growl of pain.

By dint of hard toil, the main body, under Quitzaal, had won across the marsh and were engaged in a brisk skirmish with the Sleeper's weak but resolute force of 10,000 men, to whom I now added my 4,000 archers.

Forward came the rebels over the narrow, uneven, insecure footway, and as they came, hurled themselves upon us with all their strength. 'Twas a fierce, sharp struggle before all had passed the dangerous ground, galled as they were by our deadly rain of bronze-tipped shafts, and many rolled over into the reedy quagmire on either hand, or were trampled as they fell out of all shape of human kind as their comrades pressed sternly on, but, at length, some 30,000 soldiers, our own countrymen, armed and nerved as ourselves, were slowly forcing us, step by step, bit by bit, up the gentle slope, now rendered slippery by the fallen bodies. Long and stubbornly we fought them there, slaying two of them for every one of us who fell, now charging down and making them give back on the treacherous foothold, now retreating upwards before their gradual advance, and ever quitting ourselves as men who have no fear of death, but only of dishonour.

The sun rose higher in the heavens, reached the zenith, and declined from thence towards the western distance, but still, 'neath the broiling heat, 'mid all the din and roar of battle, we held our place on that hillside, retiring slowly, it is true, but fighting, fighting, fighting!—never for a moment relaxing our efforts, never ceasing to dispute every sheltering bush, or tree, or curving earth projection that gave us an advantage, never casting eye at those who fell around us, but stepping into their places with silent readiness.

The sun sloped nearer to the sky-line as the day waned, yet still we strove against those dreadful odds, not dismayed, not disheartened, by the exultant cries of the foe and the savage yells of the two barbarian hosts that still thundered impotently on either side; and despite the desperate endeavour of the enemy to compass our destruction by nightfall, held our precarious ground till darkness stayed the strife, and both armies took a breathing space in the quiet, friendly shadows, to eat and to rest, and, if it might be, to sleep before the morrow's sun should rouse to arms once more.

During the night I made several strategic alterations in the placing of my troops, bringing to the front two thousand men from the right, and as many from the left, and dividing our van, which had borne the brunt of the battle, into two brigades, one behind the other, myself leading the first and Marenso the second. That done, I spent the remainder of the night pacing our lines, looking at the hundred watch-fires of the enemy on each side of our post, blazing up and dying down in alternation, throwing long, deep shadows into the ghostly glades beyond, where the tall trees stood out gaunt in the glare of the flames. There was not the slightest chance of sleep for me that night, till the sounds of the busy camps had subsided to a faint murmur, and had risen again with the opening day to a muttering roar; till the stars shrank back into the depths of heaven, and the few night-clouds began to scurry across the sky in the growing light; till the watch-fires sank lower and lower in the brightening air, and their charred embers smoked and smouldered greyly in the new dawn. Then, as

soon as we could make out friend and foe, we were locked in the death-grip again, striving might and main for life and victory upon that stretch of rising ground.

Thoth! what a stand was that, of our handful of soldiers beset by a myriad foes, all eager for our end! What deeds of heroism were wrought against those tireless copper-coloured armies, against the overpowering rebels who bore the blue banner up the slope in spite of all our struggles! What varying hopes and fears lightened and darkened our minds as the tide of battle rose and fell, now higher, now lower, but ever creeping up to the little knoll where Cuzcon waited, looking out over the scene with stern and unmoved visage!

For hours I searched along our line in quest of Vichri or Sothi, but my patience was unrewarded till noon had come again, when, in heading a desperate sally downhill, I met them both, fighting arm to arm.

"Now, demons in human shape and cowards withal!" I cried hoarsely, as I swept down upon their band; "at last I find you at my sword's point, where I have desired. Say your supplications to the Spirits now and quickly, that I may send you to haunt the shadows without delay, while you have no passport pieces in your hands!"

Sothi drew aside when I spoke, and his craven face blanched, but one-eared Vichri, bold in his badness, answered, scornfully disdainful:

"Great words from a little mind, Arnon the Pirate. Brave words from a hideous being. Loud words from a bullying cur. Rash words from a baffled General. Fate-sealing words from one already doomed."

"Villain! strong in acrid bitterness and evil lies and acts, and treacheries, and idle boasts; but frail of courage and unwise in head—taste that, and see if 'tis to your palate!" I said, striking out at him with "Sunderer" with all my force. The blade, though parried and foiled of its aim, came down like a dart of light, slicing off his solitary ear as neatly as it would have slit an orange in twain.

"Art one-eared no longer now, but earless!" I laughed loudly. "'Twill teach thee to heap vile abuse on thy betters in future!"

He uttered a fearful growl of pain as the severed member fell to the ground, and, made frantic by the agony and by my taunts, attacked me like a wild beast, raining blows upon me fast and furious, with sword in one hand and dagger in the other, cursing and shrieking the while, so that the sound of our conflict rose high above the roar of the battle that surged around us with unbated vigour. Parrying and fencing, I gave way before his blind, mad rage for a time, letting his strength exhaust itself, drawing him further and further from his own ranks, and then, when his blows came feebler and wilder, I turned on him with a fierce oath, and drove him back again, now plying him with remorseless rage, and spilling his blood with "Sunderer's" point in a dozen places before I made the finishing stroke.

Sothi, from the first clash of our weapons, had been seeking a chance to deal me a foul stroke in the struggle, but was prevented by the watchfulness of Alcis, the standard-bearer, who upheld the good old flag against all comers, guarding my back at the same time; and when I turned like a lion at bay and swept Vichri before me, Sothi turned tail and fled for safety a hundred paces away. A full half hour I played with my victim, piercing him here, slashing him there, dashing his dagger from his hand, shivering his blade into twenty fragments, and hacking his armour to unrecognisable shreds. In vain he strove with feet and teeth and nails when all his weapons were gone, and at last getting him down on his knees just as the Prince of Aidè and the unknown officer of the rebels rushed up with desperate charge, I struck off the hated head from the hated body, and, kicking it as it fell, hurled it far among the enemy.

"There goes the head of the vilest wretch in the camp!" I said to Alcis with exultation, "and an ugly one to boot, devoid of ears!"

"'Twere well off," said he, "and 'twere well if we could repel this onslaught or regain our men," for by this time the nearest of our soldiers was a hundred paces away, and the foe almost upon us.

"Lower the flag for a signal to Cuzcon!" I returned, "and we will stand our ground till he comes though all Ulmeca surround us. Take you this tall officer who comes here, the Prince of Aidè, and leave me the other."

"As you have said," replied the faithful soldier, obeying my order, signing to Cuzcon, and then with me facing the fearful charge that next moment burst upon us, overwhelming us as the incoming tide, urged by a strong head wind, submerges a defiant jutting point of rock arising from the sand.

Together we strove 'neath that tossing banner, now almost torn from our grasp or bent to the earth, and now floating aloft again in triumph, as one or other of us snatched it from the hands of the encircling foe. Once, with a great, hissing stroke, the Prince of Aidè shore its shaft in twain just above where my left hand held it, and a cry of victory rose from all around, but Alcis caught it as it fell and waved it aloft with a shout of joy, sweeping a clear space round him with his free hand the while. But our arms grew weary, for it was arduous work to guard our lives and that precious ensign too; and to us it seemed ages ere Cuzcon reached us, though we heard, as from afar, shouts of wonder and encouragement, and could just see, higher up the slope, Marenso striving to cut his way to assist us. At last, when I was growing faint from loss of blood—the sword-cut in my thigh that Thaska had given me in the great sea-fight having been re-opened by a thrice unlucky stroke—Alcis turned pale as death and tottering, would have let fall the flag but that I caught it from his nerveless fingers as he reeled against me. He was pierced through from the back with a long spear, the point coming out at his chest, and throwing up his arms in one last long sweep of his blade, sank expiring at my feet. But that last wild stroke of his sword cut its way through the heart of the Prince of Aidè.

Now Cuzcon and his veterans came thundering down the hill, Marenso's men parting to let them through, and all fresh to the battle drove our tired opponents before them down to the edge of the marsh as chaff before the wind, their keen, unsullied swords crashing as they went through helms and armour and shields, and leaving behind them a red track of death and dismay. As they passed I saw Sothi, borne on the human wave that went helpless before their front, and seeing him, fitted one of my smallest bullets to my sling, and whirling it singing round my head with all the strength I had, sent it hissing after the flying coward, and saw the tiny shining sphere bury itself in his brain. He reeled and fell, and that was the last of Sothi, who had not even courage to brazen out his evil deeds.

Then up the gradual declivity came Cuzcon again, scattering to right and left all the rebels who had formed in rank after the first charge; then down again to the swamp and out upon the causeway—now all solid with bodies trodden in among the faggots and the slime—repelling the barbarians who came to the relief of their discomfited allies, driving these latter, as they went over the slippery footway, into the red-coloured morass on either side, hewing away at the cloud of foes that soon encircled them, and slowly pushing them backwards and upwards. Higher up, however, Marenso's men, having had time to rally and re-form, made a determined stand, and the two forces, evenly balanced now, held each other in check till the light began to fail. All this time Atris and Valdo were keeping the two savage armies at bay; with difficulty, but with success.

Crawling away from the scene of carnage, I sought the border of the little stream over which the tide of battle had rolled, meaning to wash my wounds in its crystal waters, and cleanse my face from the grime and gore that disfigured it, but lo! when I bent to lave in the flowing rill, I

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saw that which made me recoil with loathing. *It ran ruddy with blood, as a rivulet of crimson dye!* while hacked and mutilated bodies and severed limbs, and fragments of flesh and shreds of stained clothing, came drifting down its reddened tide. Higher up, the fight was still raging upon its banks and in its flood, so that if I must have water I must seek it beyond the turmoil. Sick at heart, I turned away, and grasping "Sunderer" with wild resolve, strode along the winding, grass-grown side of the brook to where Valdo's regiments battled doggedly with the daubed and painted Ulmecs, led now by Quitzaal in person, who had left the main attack with intent to force our flank.

Right into the eddying strife I plunged, the pain of my wounds only serving to increase my recklessness, and right through it I struggled, making the good sword whirl around me as I went like a wheel of fire, bearing down axe and club and spear and blade and all things in its path, its keen edge drinking life-blood at every whizzing sweep

"I will protect thee in this fierce whirl of war."

and flashing curve, making the Red Barbarians, fierce-fanged creatures that they were, give back before my onset as a herd of frightened sheep before a hungry wolf, and at last winning for myself a clear way to the far verge of the battle, where the stream rippled over its pebbly bed untainted by the flow of human life. There, I threw myself upon its brink, drank a deep draught of the pure, refreshing fluid, washed off the sweat and dirt that stood on me in furrows and patches, bathed my hurts in the cleansing, restoring water, and, after binding them with grasses and pieces of clothing as best I could, sat awhile to rest and watch.

Looking to the left I saw Atris slowly sending the Huacans back, a dispirited crowd, towards the forest, while Valdo, in spite of the fearful odds against him, was also gaining ground, little by little, and forcing Quitzaal and his native troops more and more away from the grassy knoll lately occupied by Cuzcon. That worthy old veteran I could see with Marenso, striving like a lion to turn the current of war downhill, and so maintain the advantage already snatched by the first grand charge. The rebel Atlantians, so far as I could judge, seemed to excel our main body in number, and to be well able to prolong the contest till night once more put an end to the long drawn-out struggle.

Save for the unknown officer of slim, lithe form, this division of the hostile army was leaderless now that the Prince of Aidè and Vichri and Sothi were slain, and Quitzaal in another part of the field, but so far as the ability of one leader could compensate for the loss of four, the foe was well managed. The Unknown was everywhere, fought splendidly, led dashing sallies, or made gallant stands with equal ease, cheered on the flagging, laughed gaily with the brave, threatened the cowards and hangers-back, spoke words of comfort to those who fell near him, and ever kept so keen an eye upon the movements of our men that no stratagem availed to benefit us. Though the archers and slingers, as I could well see, made him their constant mark, though both Cuzcon and the Sleeper ever strove to reach him, the Unknown bore a charmed life and fought on as unconcernedly as though clad from top to toe in mail of proof. I followed his movements with admiring interest, thinking that presently, when I felt recovered, I would go down gladly to meet a foeman so worthy of my steel, one whom I could engage in honourable contest, to whom I owed no debt of vengeance unfulfilled; and noticed with pleasure how the rest depended on his leadership, showing how easily the day would be ours should he be laid low.

Hearing a loud cheer of triumph, I turned my head to discover Atris pursuing the beaten Huacans headlong from the field, with terrible slaughter. They had broken and fled, and the victors, after the first rush, checked their ardour and began skirting the edge of the morass with design to take our other enemies in the rear. "Well done, Atris!" I exclaimed, and "Well done, Valdo!" I added, when, looking west, I found that the Ulmecs were driven back across the stream at every point. I would have sat there some time longer, then; but, happening to glance once more at the main struggle, I saw that which made me spring to my feet in eagerness and tear down hill in hot haste, fitting a bullet to my sling as I went. Brave old Cuzcon had at last reached the Unknown Leader and crossed weapons with him, only to fall beneath a foul blow of the latter's long, thin blade. No thought now of honourable contest, for I liked that old veteran, who was always so hardy and hearty and jolly, with a liking akin to love, and was filled with anger at the dastard stroke that had laid him dead so suddenly, and as I ran, dispatched on its mission the leaden ball. It sang through the air, struck and shattered the long, thin blade, that moment uplifted to smite, but—accursed thing!—failed even to wound the Unknown Leader. I next tried an arrow, with still worse luck, for my hand was shaky and my aim hurried, so that the harmless shaft flew wide, and, growling thereat, I plunged into the thick of the battle with drawn sword.

The sun had now set, and the sky was gemmed with a thousand stars, unshaded by a single speck of floating mist, our arms were weary and our throats parched with thirst, yet we fought on there in the dim light with unabated zeal. Forcing my way to the front, I at last came face to face with the mysterious figure, and fire struck from our weapons as they clashed together, "Sunderer" sending the other's fresh blade spinning in the air a score of paces away. Then the Unknown, whose face was hidden by his mask, seemed all in a moment to lose heart, and shrank back to avoid my following stroke as no true soldier would have done, and the thirsting edge, baulked of its prey, rattled roughly, but harmlessly, upon the shining links of armour.

"Hast lost thy bravery all suddenly?" I said mockingly, holding my blade down. "When thou hast recovered it, will try another bout with thee, if thou art not too long."

For all answer, the Unknown snatched up another sword and fell upon me furiously, slashing and thrusting with

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feverish haste but little skill and less effect, so that a very few minutes sufficed me to send this new blade flying, and to wound the hand that held it, causing my opponent to sink to the ground with a moan of despair. I should have struck home then hard and true—and would that I had!—but that my gorge rose at the thought of slaying a foe so easily conquered and so helplessly at my mercy.

"Get to thy feet, and try another round with me!" I cried roughly. "'Tis naught but a scratch, and warriors are not wont to faint at sight of blood."

"Not warriors, indeed," answered the prostrate form, speaking now for the first time, and in a voice that awoke a hundred happy-evil memories, "not warriors, indeed, Macis, but high-born ladies may well be pardoned. Knowest me not, Macis, who art now known as Arnon the General? Hast so soon forgotten the Princess of Aidè, Listra, thy love?"

No, I had not forgotten, and I gritted my teeth in anger because I could not blot out the recollection of my forewarned temptation and my miserable fall.

"I remember all," I answered sternly, bending down to raise my fallen temptress, who now tore off the mask to display her lovely features.

"Then, tell me, Macis," she asked, her soft eyes pleading harder than her voice, "oh, tell me, then, that what is rumoured of thyself and the Queen, that you are her secret lover, is an idle tale. Tell me that what I have done is wrongly done, and that you love me still," and she lay in my arms, not essaying to rise, though I would have helped her.

"What have you done, Princess?" I asked, thinking of Briseis, and feeling gladly that this wanton's spell was broken now for ever.

"Done," re-echoed she, "I have laid a trap for you and your army to walk into, I have set all my officers to slay you above all others, I have promised myself to whomsoever should cut short your career, nay, I have striven to kill you myself. All this I have done in my jealous passion, for, O Macis, I have loved you as I have loved no other, and I love you still with so deep a love that I could slay you and then myself sooner than see you the lord of a rival. O, Macis, by the ties that once bound us say that I have suffered needlessly, say that you love me as before. Vichri is dead, and the Prince, my husband, is dead also; there be none to come between us."

"Save the Queen," I answered coldly, not one word of her agonised pleading touching my heart to tenderness. "I cannot tell you what you wish, for 'twas only the thought—the baneful thought—of her falsity to me that led me to your arms. Elsewise I had not known you, and had left you to the warm attentions of your many lovers. Come, rise, I pray you, for the fight is closing round us."

She made no answer in words at first, but leapt to her feet with marvellous alacrity, and gave utterance to a piercing shriek—a shriek so long and shrill that it rose high above the din and clash of battle and the cries of vanquishing and vanquished men, a shriek so full of concentrated despair, embittered disappointment, and hopeless passion that its wailing echo rings in my ears even now. Then, with a gesture of intense anger, verging upon insensate hatred, she sank to the turf again, faintly murmuring as she fell:

"For this—for this—inconstant traitor—have I loved!"

"'Art overwrought," I said calmly, loosening the linked armour and allowing the cool night breeze to blow upon her. "Lie still, so, whilst I bind your wound," for I had noticed a thin red stream oozing from her side, and found a deep cut that needed bandaging. "When morning comes you will see matters differently."

Twice, with impatient motion, she tore off the rude binding, declaring, with a burst of bitter tears, that she would have no boon from one who spurned her; but at last tired nature gained the upper hand, and she suffered me to complete my task in silence.

"There, art safe now, till better help can be given thee," I said. "Now I will protect thee in this fierce whirl of war," and kneeling by her prostrate figure, with "Sunderer" drawn, I kept her from further hurt, for something—an evil spirit, it is likely—bade me act thus, returning good for evil.

A strange thing it seemed to me, the outcast and the whilom priest of Khem, to be bending there over the form of a princess whom I had once loved but now despised, who was clad in a soldier's garb, and wounded by my own hand; while all around us fierce faces pressed close and closer, swords clanged with ceaseless clamour, spears gleamed, daggers flashed in the dim light, arrows flew and fell in deadly rain, bullets whizzed about our ears like hail, men died by hundreds, and the woods rang with the deafening sounds of conflict.

Atris had now fallen on our foes on the rear and Valdo from the right, so that the remnant of the rebel force was now completely surrounded, and fast melting away before our triumphant encircling ring. They fought sturdily and long, did those doomed renegades; but without a leader, cut off from all hope, without ground to move into a good formation, the end was not long in coming, and with a sadly diminished and worn-out array, we were left the victors of that terrible struggle.

Thus, with a brilliant blaze of glory, the sun of Atlantis' military greatness set for ever.

(To be continued.)

People with Horizontal Heads,

IN OTHER WORDS,

LEVEL-HEADED PEOPLE,

Will do well to keep their eyes open on DECEMBER 22nd, 1896.

SOMETHING STARTLING WILL APPEAR on THAT DAY.

Jumbled Story Competition.—23.

On opposite page appears a story, each line of which is numbered. The lines are all in their wrong position, and the prizes mentioned below are offered to those who write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the lines in the order most nearly correct. The title is jumbled up, and should be correctly given *and pasted on the paper containing the effort.*

The conditions are jumbled in the following paragraph as an example. The correct order of the lines is given in line 10.

1 SHORT STORIES on or before *Monday*
2 awarded to the readers whose solutions first
3 *JUMBLED STORY.*
4 Four Prizes—one of £5 and three of £1 each—are
5 *December 7th*, and envelopes must be marked
6 correct. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be
7 reach this office.
8 All attempts to be delivered at the offices of
9 offered to the readers whose keys are most nearly
10 4—9—6—2—7—8—1—5—3—12—11—13—10.
11 a sheet of paper the figures in the order they
12 Competitors in doing the story should write on
13 believe to be correct, thus:

£2 is offered to the first of the readers living in Ireland who succeeds in forwarding the correct, or most nearly correct, solution.

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JUMBLED STORY No. 23.] [See Page 726.

LOST AT SEA WITH HON. DANIEL VILLMIRK

"She is discovered writing at a table.

"Madame Durand, you must know, had founded greatest sensations that Paris had ever discovered. Handsome? Superb?"

"The Count and I considered ourselves rivals in society?" asked the Millionaire, who was thinking every member of the society, their plans, their poisoned dart or a bullet would be shot with the estimation with which Madame Durand held us dart through the Count's eye.

"Now, as you know, I am not a smoker, and by his hands in an expressive gesture—"Siberia for you to execute in connection with M. Slavonski! She saw it, she opened it, she read it, and then the member had been given a mission when—a traitor in her little finger than all the power of the king on everyone," he said.

"After finishing the letter she rang a bell and disfigured the lower part of his face, which the heavy terrific force down the smoker's throat, while the scent calls up a thousand recollections to my mind that I might die the death of a traitor.

"'This is what she is writing: 'My dear Count, Durand committed suicide on hearing of the death in my handwriting, signed with my name, and inventive genius, and thus useful.

"Within were the names and addresses of his throne—this little woman with her hand of iron, The sentence pleased him and the story bade fair fortune so they ought to be good. What? you don't receive the credit of having frustrated the traitor. Madame Durand, who was delighted with the idea. Slavonski touched his lips—"is this. The cigar contained in the centre a tiny cylinder filled with the instrument of death in his hand.

"This was the plan that the Count devised to smoke. Nonsense, man. Well, make an exception to be interesting.

"On the contrary, small, delicate-looking—in a Government"—Slavonski paused, and threw out word, *petite*. And yet this woman had more power to look at a man who is smoking a cigar. The very cigar itself would be consumed away, so as to leave the cigar in the flame.

"The society went to pieces, since Madame recovered to find myself the hero of one of the arm of his chair.

"Well, a *grand coup* was to be effected, each was discovered—a traitor—Slavonski!"

"The Count showed this ingenious cigar to me. His face was near mine as I put the end of the merest accident I placed the wrong end of the table.

"Well, the Count, you may be sure, having noted for the selectness of its patrons. After dinner insisted on taking me to dinner at a restaurant where I was then staying, and to offer me a cigar, gave it to a man-servant, with orders to deliver it to-day."

"Thanks, I'd rather not," replied Slavonski. "The woman."

"Ah," said the Millionaire. "Her heart of steel." She ordered him immediately to proceed to Paris, and leaning across the table, held the light towards himself in his chair, and smiled blandly with the members—among them myself and the Count that he had not wasted his dinner.

"All that I recollect of what then occurred"——fools that we were.

The Millionaire drank off his port and settled air of a man who has dined sumptuously.

The Millionaire pushed a box of cigars across the objects, everything in fact that he knew concerning moustache he wore did not entirely conceal.

His companion sitting opposite him was a inventive genius. His latest idea was a cigar which selected the Count as executioner, and when he directed to the Russian Government.

"But what of Madame Durand and the secret Russian, Slavonski by name. A horrible wound came to her in obedience to her letter, he held nothing behind which might tell a tale.

"The Count, as I have told you, was a man of powerful explosive. When the cigar was ignited a exploded in my mouth, but drove the poisoned from the table.

"Slavonski. I. In truth, however, it was not of her chosen lover," said Slavonski, rising abruptly immediately to the Count.

"Slavonski? You!" exclaimed the Millionaire.

The Millionaire threw his leg carelessly over the cigar in my mouth. The Count struck a match, precisely? I have an important comm ssion for which you told me—a pretty device!'

"Two days later I met the Count in Paris. He the Count offered me a cigar.

"Good. The curtain is rung up, and a woman and her heart of steel."

"Try one of these," he said, "they cost me a small fact is, it is as much as I can do to force myself even —*ciel*, and what recollections!"

Slavonski drew his hand across his eyes. He did bring about my downfall. He drew up a document not care to disclose his life's secret to this man. This secret society had precisely one hundred whom I have mentioned, who was a man of puzzled, I see. I will explain:

"What recollections?" he said. "Tell me; I I who was the traitor. It was the Count. You are known."

"Well," he said, "this is my story: First; a little white hand signed a death warrant. She drawn up this document, took good care that it will you come and see me at eleven o'clock to-night, and was at the head of a Russian secret society. And be sure and bring with you the cigar of them. Had this letter reached the Russian should fall into Madame's hands, and that he should But he was expected to amuse him.

"I was unconscious for a short time, but soon would like to know."

"He fell dead across the table.

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A NINETEENTH CENTURY WITCH.

"THERE is something uncanny about the girl. I cannot make her out;" and Charlie Vanderveer puffed viciously at his cigar. "Why, the other night I was up there she started by reading my palm and ended by hypnotising me. By Jove! Tom, I was frightened—absolutely frightened."

"That is easy," answered Bransford with an indulgent smile.

"What, the palmistry or the hypnotism?"

"Both; and the frightening thrown in."

"Well, you will see her to-night, and can then judge for yourself. Here we are, now."

Saying which they walked up the broad steps of an uncomfortable-looking mansion, and were ushered into the drawing-room by a stately-looking butler.

Miss Morgan was as charming a girl as one would care to meet. She had beauty, numerous accomplishments, and, incidentally, wealth. Within the past few years she had developed a craze for anything bordering on the mystic or supernatural. At first it was palmistry, but recently it had developed into mind-reading, hypnotism, and ingeniously-planned, though entirely unsuccessful, wanderings of the astral body.

Yet she had impressed some of her friends to such an extent that they would dream night-marish dreams about her, and when they informed her of the fact she would calmly announce that she really had been with them in astral form.

Tom Bransford thought of all this as he was presented to this self-confessed witch. To her credit be it said that the young lady thought too much of her personal appearance to adopt any outlandish form of dress; on the contrary, the *tout ensemble*, while certainly bewitching, was anything but uncanny.

After the first introductions and perfunctory conventionalities, the conversation was turned to the subject of hypnotism, and Bransford volunteered to become a subject with foolhardy daring. "Just to see what the sensation was like," as he meekly explained.

Overjoyed at the prospect of a new victim to experiment upon, the young hostess offered him an invitingly comfortable-looking armchair, while she, seating herself before him and taking his hands in hers, directed that he should look steadily into her eyes. Bransford did so, while Miss Morgan fixed her lustrous eyes on his as though she would look him through and through.

"Don't stare at me that way too long, Miss Morgan; I have a weak heart," interrupted Bransford.

Estelle laughed.

"You must not interrupt the psychic current by talking. But tell me, have you experienced any strange sensations yet?"

"Yes," replied Bransford, "the strangest and wildest sensations. I can hardly talk. I feel that I am going—going." And, as a matter of fact, Tom's eyes closed while he was yet talking, and in another moment he collapsed, helpless and powerless, in the chair.

"I have never been so successful," cried the girl, clasping her hands delightedly. "He has passed beyond the suggestion stage, and now must be in the somnambulistic stage."

Then, turning to the limp form of Bransford, she commanded: "Stand up. You are now completely in my power. Stand up and open your eyes."

But Bransford did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, his legs and arms became rigid, his teeth clenched, and his breathing laboured.

Estelle turned pale.

"He is in the cataleptic stage; but I think I had better wake him up, don't you?"

"By all means," assented Vanderveer, whose face had assumed an almost greenish hue with fright.

But in vain did this fair disciple of Mesmer resort to passes, commands, and finally tearful entreaties. Bransford could not be aroused, and his condition seemed to become more serious every moment.

"Oh, Mr. Bransford, do wake up. If you have the slightest regard for me, I beseech of you to wake up,"

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cried the girl anxiously. "Oh, Mr. Vanderveer, do you please say something to rouse him; your voice will be more familiar than mine."

"Tom," cried Charlie at the top of his voice, "wake up, old man!" Then shaking him by the shoulders, he pleaded with him wildly. "Tom, old friend, you are all right. Wake up, Tom, if you love me, wake up." Then reproachfully to Estelle: "He told you he had a weak heart."

"Yes," she replied, now crying hysterically, "but I thought he was joking. Do please go for a doctor as quickly as you can."

"But I can't leave him here; he'll fall on the floor," said Charlie. "Don't you think I had better carry him to the lounge?"

"Pray do, and then I can bathe his forehead with some extract, and fan him while you are gone."

Bransford's remains—for they hardly seemed to be more—were then laboriously half lifted, half dragged from the chair to the lounge, and a daintily embroidered pillow placed under his head. Estelle had in the meantime supplied herself with all available restoratives and took her place by his side, while Charlie hurried away for medical aid.

Left alone with her unfortunate victim, she unburdened her soul aloud.

"Oh, what have I done? Perhaps he will die. And I had heard so much about him. I was sure we were going to be good friends. And I did like him from the moment I saw him this evening—and now I have probably killed him. Oh, how could I do it—how could I do it?"

A sort of spasm passed over the unconscious form before her, and she thought his breathing had ceased, so she put her hand over his parted lips to see if she could feel any breath, when to her horror and surprise the trembling hand was kissed in a most life-like manner, and Bransford's dark eyes looked into hers with a humourous twinkle.

"Remember," he said quietly, "I am not responsible. I am hypnotised, you know." Then, still keeping her hand in his own, he sat up and asked gravely: "Don't you think that you have had a pretty good lesson in the danger of playing with edge-tools and dabbling in occult arts you do not know anything about?"

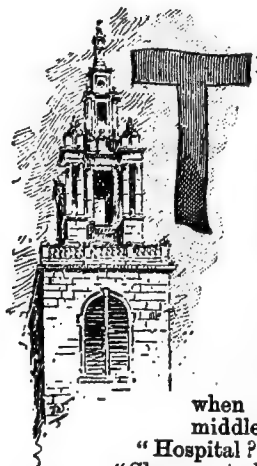
"I think it was perfectly abominable and cruel for you to give me such a terrible fright," she cried, pulling away her hand.

"It might easily have really occurred. Come now. You have said you like me, then forgive me; but promise to be a bewitching woman, and not a womanly witch in the future. The day of witchcraft has long since passed; nineteenth-century witches have no excuse for existing. Is it a bargain?"

"Rather a one-sided bargain; but I think you are right, and I promise."

When Vanderveer returned an hour later, after calling unsuccessfully on five physicians, he found Tom and Estelle chatting as cosily together as though they had been friends for years. BELLE BILLOWE.

THE SCUM THAT RISES.



THERE was the man, shadowing him as usual!

Mat was in the lodging-house, rallying not at all from the "accident" of three months ago. What kept the life in her? Gratitude? No it was not gratitude, for the mere fact of his dragging her from under the hoofs of the horses where she had let herself fall was scarcely calculated to call forth her gratitude.

He could recall that day, how she had looked at him when he pulled her out from the middle of the street.

"Hospital?" he had said to the policeman.

"She goes to her home—my home. I'm her brother. Her name? Smith."

And there she had been nursed by him and old Mrs. Lanigan these three months, and—look!—there was that man taking the trouble of appearing not to shadow him.

He had been in close quarters before, and he might even now make a break for it and leave Mat.

Though, as for that, he might go and tell her the truth and the chances were that she would not despise him for possessing wit enough to baulk those who were tracking him. She had had her own failures in her short life, and she might even get up a new admiration for him because he declined a failure now.

Yet, if he told her the truth, he should have to tell her the manner of his life, and up to now he had kept that from her—he knew not why—and she would feel that he had been false to her in representing himself as a workman on half time, whose short hours of labour gave him the liberty to look after her, when Mrs. Lanigan was not sober enough to do so. He was now in the street where Mat's doctor lived.

He had gone out to see the doctor, after debating for hours with himself whether he should give in, or make a break for it. He pressed the electric button and entered the practitioner's consulting-room. He had called in for Mat. The doctor held out his hand in his bland manner.

"Ah!" he said, "you come concerning your sister. A most interesting case; the vitality is simply remarkable—remarkable, Mr. Smith."

"I want to know," said "Mr. Smith," "how long she's got to live."

The doctor looked at him; he thought this question

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as heartless as many a phase in people of this man's station in life—evidently the brother was tired of caring for his sister; it was not an unusual thing for such people to tire of their invalids.

"She may last a week," he answered, "though I do not think it will be so long."

Mr. Smith pulled a roll of notes from his pocket.

"This is all I've got," he said. "It's a good deal more than your bill can be. But Mat's to be looked after for a week, and you've got to be paid for keeping a secret. I am going to be arrested to-day. I am Bill Sharp—that's one of my names. I have been shadowed for months. I'm wanted by the police."

The doctor had stepped back. Sharp laughed:

"That's all right," he said. "But I think you'll do me a favour. Mat mustn't know what I am."

"She has told me how good you have been to her. Your sister——"

"She ain't my sister. I said she was to keep her from going to the hospital that time. See? Look here!" He frowned, noting the expression on the doctor's face. "I never saw her before that time she was hurt. She's had a hard scramble for her life, and she's only eighteen—no father, no mother, no anything, only hard, honest work to keep her soul and body together. She got tired at last and wanted to make an end of it that day I saved her. I—I want her to go on thinking I'm honest as she is."

"But if you are arrested to-day?"

"I'm coming to that. I'm going to have a job of work in Hackney and won't be back for ten days. Understand? In ten days—well, you know, it'll all be over with her by that time. All I want is for you to get a good nurse for her. And you won't give me away to her, will you? I don't think you're the sort of man to go back on a poor little thing like her, doctor—no father, or mother, all alone, and tired of her life. Doctor, I—I——"

"I'll help her," the doctor said. When Sharp stepped again into the street he saw evidences of his being apprehended before he had seen Mat for the last time. He would have proved dangerous to take at that moment—for hadn't he been sentimental in the doctor's office?

He lurched through a cross street.

Why should he break his record of eluding the grasp of the law? A note to Mat, a telegram would do as well as seeing her.

But he went on to the house, entered it, and went up the stairs.

He stepped to the hall window and looked out. Down in the street the man who had shadowed him for so long was reinforced by another, while two blue-coated "coppers" had paused in the doorway.

The looker-on smiled; he could do it, and it would be a joke to fool the men and in a place of safety plan for another bold stroke of business.

A low sound came to his ear, so low that he might have told himself that he had so often heard some such sound within the past three months that now it was always in his mind.

Should he go to that room?

"If Bill was only here!" A woman's voice in utter weariness sighed from the room.

He turned from the window and entered the room, closing and locking the door.

To see the cadaverous form upon the bed raised in expectation, to see the wan smile spread over the worn face till Mat was a thing transfigured—no longer a creature of pain and agony, no longer homeless and friendless, but a woman whose soul had waked to the need of woman—that one love in all the world upon which she can rely—was a cheering sight indeed to Bill.

"Why, Mat, old girl," he said, "have you missed me?"

"Oh, no," she answered. "I knew you'd come when you could."

He had a flower in his pocket, he gave it to her and she held it up to her heart.

"Now I'm going to fix up," he said, and went about the room tidying it as a man use to doing much for himself.

The girl was regarding the rose he had given her, passing one bony finger after the other over its velvet surface.

"It must be like the country, Bill," she said, "this rose, so fresh and pretty. Sometimes I get to thinking of the country, till I hear the air in the trees and the birds twittering as the sun comes up. My mother was born in the country and she used to tell me all about it when I was restless. When we were making coats for the sweaters she used to tell me about the cows on her father's place."

"I say, Mat," said the man, "Mrs. Lanigan's gone to a wake; she won't be any good for a week. By-the-way, how would you like to go to the country?"

"Would you go, too?" she asked, on the alert.

"Well, yes," he answered her, "after I get back."

"Back?" She let the rose fall on the sheet before her.

"I haven't told you," he went on confusedly, "that I've got to go to Hackney for ten days, have I? A job, you know. Ten days ain't long, and then, maybe, you can go to the country."

"That's all right," she replied drily. "And this job of work, will it pay you?"

"It's better than being on half time, isn't it?" he asked. "You might as well know it all. I've been to the doctor, and he'll have a nurse here to-day. And you won't miss me too much, you're too level-headed for that."

"Oh, no," she replied quickly. "Ten days, did you say?"

"Yes," he answered. "I'm going to-day."

He had told his lie and there was still time for him to get off and save his reputation as a successful man; that back window led to a court, the doctor would soon be here with the nurse, and there was an even chance that Mat would never know the truth, after all.

"Mat," he said hotly.

She raised her hand:

"Bill, let me say a word first."

"But I want to tell you——"

"Bill, what you've done for me has made me think of—up there." She pointed with the rose skyward. "Mother used to talk about it."

His face grew stubborn.

"I don't want to be soft," she said, "but wouldn't you do something before you go away? When you was a young 'un did you ever say 'Our Father'?"

"What rot!" he blurted out. She laughed. "That's all right," she said. "Perhaps it's lying here so long makes me soft, and——"

"Look here," he interrupted angrily, "it ain't much to say. I learnt it off of the matron at the Home when I was a kid."

"Oh, yes," she said gently, "you was brought up in a Home for children, wasn't you? I wish you'd had a mother—that is a mother to *know*. My mother would

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have liked you, and you'd have liked her. She was awful kind."

Every minute meant much to him; five minutes more and he might be too late to elude those men outside.

"It's your lead, Mat," he said. She hesitated a moment, and then she said, in a low voice, the "Our Father," in which he joined her clearly and distinctly.

When it was over, there was no movement on the part of either of them for the space of a second. Then slowly the man's face went down to hers, and for the first time since he had known her, his lips touched her cheek. With a low cry she flung her arms round his neck.

"Bill," she sobbed. "I hope you won't forget me—not all your life long."

"I won't, Mattie," he answered reassuringly. "I won't; so don't think anything like that."

"But why won't you?" she asked eagerly, still clinging to him. "Tell me why."

He did not answer her, but he held her off till she could look up into his eyes. Then he laid her head down upon his breast and folded his arms round her protectingly. He believed that she had seen in his eyes the answer he felt it would have been "soft" to word. A sound was borne in to him from the hall outside; someone tried the door.

He placed her head gently upon the pillow.

"Some friends o' mine," he said, "going with me."

He unlocked the door and rapidly gained her bedside again.

"Good-bye, Mat," he said hurriedly.

"Good-bye," she returned.

There were two men in the room, guarding the door.

"This is my sick sister," Sharp, or Smith, said quietly.

"No," cried the voice of Mat, "not his sister. I'm Mattie Morgan. He saved my life when I didn't care for anything in the world, and hadn't a friend. He did not know me till that minute, and he brought me here and nursed me, and he's the best man under God's Heaven. Now he's going away for ten days——"

"I've told her," interrupted the man, "that we're going to Hackney about that job of work, and I'll be back in ten days or so for a spell. I'm ready. Good-bye, Mat. The doctor will soon be here with the nurse."

"That's all right," she smiled cheerily. "Go, and have a good time after all this poking about the sick-room. Good-bye, old man—good-bye."

She kept her eyes on him till he was out of the room, though he did not again look at her.

"I'm glad he don't know how far away I'll be before ten days," she said softly to herself. "I'm glad he don't know how near the end is, poor Bill! In a few days—then I'll have the country out there in the cemetery."

She held the rose up to her lips, straining her ears to catch the last echo of the steps that went down the stairs. If she could only see him once more—if she might reach that window!

"Our Father, our Father, give me strength to get to the window so that I may see Bill once more!"

Out in the street, a man on each side of him, Sharp came. There was something in the men that angered him.

"You're thinking of the soft talk up in that room," he said. "She's dying, and she's such a young, little thing, and she hasn't anybody in the world, and—and——"

He struck his fist fiercely on the palm of the other hand, "I didn't know why I wanted her to think me an honest man. I know now. It was because she loved me; and if I'd been good enough for her I'd asked her to be my wife. Mat——"

Something seemed to force him to look up to the window of the room where she was. He started back; for she was resting on the sill, leaning far out, her eyes on him. He saw that she smiled and he smiled in return. Then with a weak movement she threw to him the rose he had given her. She saw him catch it and put it in his pocket, keeping his hand in the pocket with it. Then she saw nothing more, for she had fallen back from the window white and limp. So the nurse had really nothing to do when she came, and the doctor said the end had come suddenly, as it often did in these cases. But at that time Bill was in the car on the way to Hackney, his hand still clasping the rose, his thoughts reaching back to the girl he would have asked to be his wife if he had only been good enough for her.

R. C. V. Meyer.

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By George Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER LI.

Something Strange for Breakfast.

"Oh, my dear, it's really 'evvenly, it is indeed! Breakfast out here in the ferander, and the garden right down to the cliff, and the yaller merrygolds and sunflowers, and sea like silver, and the sky as blue as blue. My! What a scene it would make, my dear.—It does one good to breathe."

"Then you are pleased, Aunt dear?"

"Pleased ain't the word for it, my precious! I am glad I've come. Now, look here. We won't talk no more about dying, neither of us, like we did yesterday, 'tain't worth it. Spite of all its bothers and troubles and worries, the world's too good for people to be in a hurry to go. Why, what with the nice, pretty, clean bedroom, and the window open, and being a bit tired, I slept for hours, and never felt that splinter in my arm once.—I did sleep!"

"I am glad, Aunt dear."

"And so did you, my pet."

"Did I, Aunt?"

"That you did, for I woke at two o'clock, and there was the moon shining on the sea from right away to the shore. And I came through to your room, and there you were with your pretty face on the pillow, sleeping just like an angel, and as innocent and good."

"Oh, you dear, foolish old Auntie! There, sit down; you must want your breakfast."

"Want it? I'm as hungry as a hogre, my dear. What is it—soles? Now, that is nice, so long as they're fresh. How clever someone was as invented eggs and crumbs."

They had just commenced their breakfast, in the corner of the verandah, when a party entered the empty coffee-room of the little hotel, talking rather noisily, and one of them said:

"There's a table close to that window; let's sit there;" and directly after it was evident from the voices that three men were taking their places to breakfast.

"You didn't lose much time," said one. "I thought I'd better send and ask you to come over."

"Quite right: can't be too careful over business. I had the pony put to, and came on at once."

"Coffee?"

"By-and-bye, I'll take a glass of something short first."

The table gong was sounded, an order was given for brandy and seltzer, and the conversation was renewed, to the accompaniment of the clattering of knives and forks, but Aunt Duncan was too much occupied over her breakfast to heed anything else till, raising her eyes, she saw Lucy sitting grasping the edge of the table, looking white and strange.

Before she could speak, the girl, who was seated with her back to the window a few feet away, held up her hand and whispered "Hush!" Then, half closing her eyes, she appeared to be listening intently.

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"What——" began her Aunt, in an excited whisper, but an imperious gesture stopped her, and she, too, listened intently to words fraught with interest to another's fate.

CHAPTER LII.

A Plot Unveiled.

The voice was familiar enough to Lucy. Once its rough tones had been heard they could not easily be forgotten, and, in addition, the speaker had a way of giving his lips a smack, as if to emphasise his words.

"Don't tell me," came clearly to the listeners' ears. "There isn't a doubt about it. She'll win, or my name ain't Vinnis; I haven't trained her for nothing. I know what I say. With my boy, Sam, up, nothing that's entered can come near her." And this was additionally emphasised by a thump on the table which made the cups rattle.

"Unless——" said the man who had first spoken.

"There ain't no unless in it," said the same harsh voice. "She's fit as a fiddle, sir; and it'll be a big thing for him, and so I tell you."

"Well, don't shout, old man."

"Oh, I'm not going to shout. You've sent for me, and I suppose you mean business."

"Of course."

"Stand in fair and square?"

"Stand in fair and square. And it means a pot of money for all of us."

"Ah, but it can't be done, sir."

"Oh, can't it? There, I'm not going to try and teach you your business, Josh Vinnis, I've known you too long."

"Yes. You've known me too long, sir."

"Well, I'm not the man for beating about the bush, and so I'll speak out. There's those behind me who will help us to make a big thing out of it. It means thousands apiece. We know, of course, that she's bound to win."

"Yes, sir, that's it. She's bound to win."

"Well, then, now's your time. You don't want to chuck away a fortune."

"That's so, sir. I don't."

"Will you join in it, then?"

"That depends. What does it mean? Put it straight out, and I'll tell you. I'm not going to spoil my character for a few pounds."

"Speak low."

"It's all right. The people at the other end have gone out of the room."

"Well, then, Mr. Vinnis, it means this—a couple of thou. if the mare can't win to-morrow."

"But she would win. A couple of thou. Bah! I shall clear that as it is, for I've made a good book, and so I tell you."

"Now we're getting to business," said another, who had hardly spoken before. "Very well, we'll guarantee you three. What do you say to that?"

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"I'd like to have my glass filled again, gentlemen," said Vinnis. "A man wants a drop o' sperrits to keep the heart in him when he's being insulted."

"Business first, sir, and then we'll have in a bottle of fizz. Come, be reasonable. I tell you we share fair and square."

"And guarantee me ten thou.? That's my figure, gentlemen."

There was a hearty laugh, and the scratching of matches, followed by the pungent fumes of strong cigars.

"Make it twenty, old man," said the first speaker. "Don't do things by halves."

"I ain't goin' to, sir, and I ain't going to be unreasonable, but this is a big thing to me, and my figure's share and share alike, with a certainty of five thousand for me."

"There's my hand upon it," said the first speaker. "We'll give you five thou. if the mare comes in nowhere."

"That mare can't come in nowhere, gentlemen," said Vinnis in a low voice. "No pulling would make her. She's a regular little devil, and if my boy were to begin to play tricks with her mouth, she'd just get hold of the bit, and away she'd go like the wind."

"Then she mustn't run."

"That's it; not if she isn't to win the race."

"Very well, then, you must work her."

"Nay, I'm not going to hurt the mare: maybe she'll be mine some day. She's no use to anyone else."

"Why?"

"Because there's no one else dare mount her but my boy."

"You needn't hurt her."

"I'm not going to try, sir, for twenty thou., so there!" and the speaker banged his fist down upon the table again.

"All right: work it as you like, but if you can't pull, and you won't—er—get at her, I don't see how you're going to manage."

"Don't you? Well then, I do. You leave it to me."

"And suppose she wins?"

"Why, then you'll lose."

"Yes, and you too. But business, business."

"I've agreed: what more do you want, gentlemen?"

"To feel sure that we're not going to lose a pot o' money, Mr. Vinnis, that's all. Why can't you speak out?"

"Oh, I don't mind speaking out. I'm about tired of him and his ways. He's reg'lar broke up, and it would be all the better for me if he goes, because I shall get the mare. No one else dare buy her. Look here, gentlemen: you may as well make a big plunge of it, for as I am in it I'll do the thing right. It's make your hay while the sun shines, eh?"

"Yes, of course," said one of the trio hoarsely.

"Well, I'll tell you: it's simple as simple. The mare won't let anyone ride her but my boy. She'd savage anyone else who went near her—strike him down with her hoof, and then seize him by the throat with her teeth. No one dare mount her but my boy."

"The beast! Why, it would be a charity to poison her."

"What, a mare that can win any race I like to train her for? No, thank you. She can be made to bring in a big income for the man who owns her."

"Indeed!" said one of the men sarcastically. "What about Lord Braetoun?"

"That's a different matter, sir. It means a big income for the man who knows how to manage her, and that man isn't Lord Braetoun."

"Then you'd buy her if she came to the hammer?"

"I should, and perhaps I shall, eh?"

"Seems very likely; but what are you going to do?"

"Never you mind. You leave it to me."

"Well, we are going to, but you might say."

Vinnis gave a little laugh, and Lucy felt that she could see his low type, animal face, as he leant over the table and said in a low voice, but one that was perfectly audible to the listeners:

"Easy enough. You've got the right man to help you, I tell you, my boy is the only man she will let mount her."

"Yes; you told us that," said one of the men impatiently.

"Well, suppose Sam isn't there to-morrow."

"What!" cried the other. "By George! Josh Vinnis, you're a very Napoleon among trainers."

"Pst!" whispered his companion, and, rising softly, he walked to the window, struck a match, and stepped half out, to stand lighting a cigar, and then puffed away for a few minutes.

"What do you say to a sail?" he said aloud. "Sea's like glass. Lovely morning."

"Ah, wouldn't be a bad thing," said the other, as he turned back and walked in. "But you haven't done, have you?"

"Done? Yes. I don't know, though. I'll have another cup of coffee."

"Anyone there?" whispered his companion, rattling a coffee cup in the saucer the while.

"Yes."

"The devil!"

"Only an old woman and a girl at breakfast. They couldn't have heard out there. Visitors from town, I think."

They stopped talking for a few moments, and then passed out into the verandah, glancing sharply at Aunt Duncan and her niece, but the old lady looked stolid enough, and sat sipping her coffee, while Lucy bent over a loaf, from which she was cutting a slice.

The next minute the odour of strong cigars was all that was left to indicate that anyone had been there, and Lucy bent toward her aunt.

"Could you hear what they said?"

"Every word, my darling," said the old woman excitedly. "Why, it's a regular horse plot. They're going to ruin him."

"Auntie! it's dreadful. What shall I do?"

"Go and—— No, you mustn't go to him, my pet—write to him, and tell him what's going on."

"But what good will that do, Auntie?" cried Lucy wildly. "Mr. Daines says he has staked everything on the mare winning."

"Well, if he knows they'll be obliged to make her win."

"No, no, Auntie; it's a horrible piece of trickery. If he is told, it would only mean a quarrel, and he would discharge both the Vinnises. Oh, I never liked that man; and the boy, his son, is a nasty, foxy little wretch of a fellow. It's ruin for him—ruin. Don't talk to me, please. I want to think. What shall I do—what shall I do?"

"If it was me, Lucy, I should send for the police," said Aunt Duncan decisively.

"Oh, Auntie, Auntie; be silent, please," cried Lucy.

"But I'm that indignant I feel as if I must talk, my dear. Yes, I should send for the police."

"But can't you see that would do no good?"

"No, my darling. It's as bad as robbery. It's a reg'lar swindle, and the police would take 'em before the magistrates, and punish 'em."

"But that wouldn't make his mare win the race."

"Yes, it would, the magistrates would make the proper jockey ride her and win."

"No, no, no, Auntie," cried Lucy despairingly. "It's ruin for him—ruin. What shall I do?"

"Oh, dear me!" cried Aunt Duncan, "I never did see such a world as this is. Just as I settle myself down for a real bit of enjoyment, if all this don't go and happen. I did think we was going to have a pleasant outing, that I did."

"Please—please, Auntie, don't—don't talk," cried Lucy pleadingly. "I want to think what's best to do. Oh! Quick, Aunt, dear, those men are coming back, and that wretched Vinnis knows me from going down to the farm."

"What! Go away? No, my dear. Stop and face the

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wretch, say I, and let him see we know of his wickedness. You shall stop."

"No, no, come quickly. He must not see me here." And before the trio, consisting of the hard, horsey-looking trainer, and a couple of over-dressed, loud-looking beings of the bookmaker type, had reached one end of the verandah from the grounds, Lucy was hurrying through the coffee-room, and Aunt Duncan followed her to her room.

CHAPTER LIII.

The Virtuous Vinnises.

It was the day of the race, and Browwood was, as usual, thronged. Braetoun had passed the night at the hotel, and, looking haggard and feverish, he was crossing the hall when he ran against Daines.

"Hallo! You here?" he cried.

"Yes, I'm here."

"Don't look very cheerful. Haven't been betting against the mare, have you? Because, if so, hedge while there's time."

"Hang the mare!" cried Daines.

"After she has pulled this off for me, and as soon as you like, for I'm about sick of it all. Too much worry and anxiety over it, and I want rest."

"Are you on heavily?"

"Heavily? It's neck or nothing—man or mouse, my lad."

"Indeed!" said Daines, looking at him closely; "well, I had gathered that bit of news pretty nearly. I suppose you'll be a fool to the end."

"Yes, my boy! I shall be a fool to the end. Here, what are you staring at? Don't glare at a man like that. I look bad? Well, of course I do, with a thing like this on my mind; but I shall be all right afterwards, when she has pulled it off. She looks in the most perfect condition, Cy. You ought to make something off her. Josh Vinnis is a splendid trainer. Said he had always believed in the mare, and that nothing can touch her. Here, what are you glowering at? I do hate for a man to look at one like that."

"I was thinking how bad you looked."

"Well, so do you, for the matter of that."

"Enough to make me."

"Eh, what's wrong with you?"

"You ask that?"

"Of course I do. I want to know. Confound it, how slowly the time goes! Here, what are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking what a scoundrel you've turned out, Braetoun."

"What! No, I won't get in a passion. I've got too much at stake to-day, and must be cool. But what the devil do you mean?"

"You swore to me that everything was at an end between you and her."

"Well, what of that? I did swear it, and so it is. I'm sick of the girl, and of everything else. Take her, and marry her if you like. I never want to see her again. Now, why am I a scoundrel?"

"For playing fast and loose with everybody—wife—mistress—even with the man who has helped and served you again and again."

"Oh, well, that's all over now. When I asked you to get her away from me I never thought you were going to make a fool of yourself over the little jade."

"But it is not all over," cried Daines hotly. "Poor girl! She might be happy now if it were not for you and your confounded trifling with her feelings."

"Oh, hang her feelings! and you too. Don't worry me now with your conundrums. I've too much at stake. Speak out, man, speak out."

"I will," said Daines fiercely. "Where is she?"

"Whom do you mean—the mare or Lucy?"

"Don't play with me, man. Where is Lucy?"

"How the dickens should I know?"

"You do know, you trickster?"

"Look here, Cy, if you weren't a miserable cripple I'd knock you down."

"You're too helpless a wreck yourself now to do it. Even I, weak as I am, could thrash you."

"Who's the coward now?"

"You, for getting that poor lass away from me, knowing what you do."

"I—I get her away? Not likely."

"There, it's of no use to deny it. At your instigation she came down to Sandiwell the night before last, and stayed at the hotel."

"The dickens she did!"

"Bah! No acting, man. Yesterday she left the place again, about the same time that you came down from town."

"Daines, the detective, by Cyrus himself. Why, here's the wily copper on the trail."

"Do you want me to take you by the throat, Braetoun, and choke the truth out of you? I'm just in the humour to do the desperate, so take care."

There was something so fierce in his old companion's eyes that, broken as he was, and with shattered nerves, Braetoun shrank from him, and changed his tone entirely.

"Here, what is it, old man? I swear I didn't know she came down."

"You swear!" cried Daines bitterly. "Once your word was enough, but the gentleman is dead, and one has to deal with a horsey trickster, up to every move, and ready to play it even on his best friend."

"Well then, I won't swear. On my honour."

"Your honour!" cried Daines scornfully. "Where is she?"

"Gone to the devil for aught I know or care. Here, get out of the way; I must go to the stable again."

"You don't go till you've told me."

"If you try to stop me like this, hang you!—I'll hand you over to the police."

"If you live to do it," whispered Daines fiercely. "You're ready to go down now with one of your fits."

"Hang you!" cried Braetoun, trembling. "You coward! Knowing what you do, Daines, don't, don't upset me, man," he said, breaking down into a feeble tone of appeal. "I want all my strength now, to see this race through. I must win it. If I don't I must go under—bullet or something—and the old woman will be ruined too. I tell you I didn't know Baby came down. I haven't seen her. I haven't had her taken away."

Daines looked at his shifty eyes searchingly, and then said bitterly:

"I'd give the world to be able to believe you, Rod; but you've cheated me too often: I can't credit a word. Look here, I throw myself on your mercy. If you have a spark left in you of the old Rod Braetoun I loved as a boy and thought all that was manly and brave, and heroic, as I writhed at my own feebleness, help me. I've gone mad over her, Rod. I love her, and I'd give my life for hers, or to spare her pain. Now tell me where you have sent her, or—yes—I know it—she's here in this hotel."

Braetoun's face flushed with rage, but he turned pale again, and he said quite gently:

"I can't help what you feel about me. I suppose it's right, Cy. I took the wrong turn, and I'm what I am; but what I've said is the truth. I haven't seen or heard anything of the girl for more than three months. There, I must go to the stables now."

Daines made no attempt to stay him, but looked at him half convinced, and then went to the office of the hotel, for, as Braetoun went away, the idea came back to him that Lucy was in the house.

"No, sir," was the answer to his inquiries. "We've had every room taken for a fortnight. There was two fell in

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yesterday, but they were taken at once by a lady and gentleman."

"A young, slight, fair lady?"

The clerk laughed.

"Not at all, sir. Quite the opposite."

Daines turned away, and stood musing for a moment or two, and then followed Braetoun to the stables, where after some difficulty at the doors, Braetoun came out with a fierce look in his eyes.

"Now, look here," he cried, "there's only one thing in life for me for the next two or three hours, and if you're coming to worry me about that cursed woman I'll give you in charge for a madman."

"I'm not going to worry you. I'm not going to say a word to you, Braetoun, but I'm going to follow you like your shadow till I've found Lucy."

"Follow me, then, only let it be like my shadow, and then I shall not mind."

He walked back into the stable, where the mare was standing turning back her eyes to the opened door, and laying down her ears and arching her back, with her tail tucked lightly between her legs, beautiful, satin-skinned, the veins standing out like a net-work all over her neck, the very perfection of a highly bred racer of the most savage, vicious type.

Vinnis was there on guard, looking hard and important, ready to scowl at the new-comer as he chewed a cigar in his lips, one which had never been lit but was growing gradually shorter from the wrong end, while just beyond the end of the loose box in which the mare was tethered by a couple of reins, sat Sam Vinnis, the little, old, yellow-looking boy, withered, wrinkled, and cunning-looking as an antique Chinaman, and watching everything and everybody with his twinkling, ferrety eyes.

The boy was seated upon a corn-bin, covered from neck to toe in a long drab overcoat, his closely cropped bullet-head looking unpleasantly suggestive of a term of penal servitude; and as Braetoun addressed him he drummed with his heels upon the galvanised iron corn-bin, and grinned with insolent familiarity.

"Now, I trust to you, Sam," said Braetoun, "you must pull this off for me. Recollect I shall not be shabby to you but be ready to give you a very handsome tip."

"You let him alone, my lord," said Vinnis almost roughly. "He knows his bit, and he's 'gesting of it. I don't want him crammed with no noo idees. He's been told exactly what to do, and if you let him alone he'll do it."

"I only want him to understand that he must win, man," said Braetoun angrily.

"Well, that's what I've been a hinstructing of him over, my lord. Now, if you'll just go in the hotel, and make yourself comf'table till it's time to go to the race, and then just give a look in at the saddling paddock, everything'll go right."

"Yes, but I must see how things are going on," said Braetoun impatiently.

"Then what's the good o' me, my lord?" said the man roughly. "What have I been doin' all these months? There's my work, look at it, and your friend too. Fit as a fiddle arn't in it, aside that mare. Did you ever see anything fitter?"

"No: she's in splendid condition, Vinnis: but I cannot help feeling anxious."

"Why, o' course, my lord, and that's what me and the boy feels. We'll do our best; but if you comes a-hoppin' in and out here like a cat on hot bricks, and a-worrying me and Sam and the mare, you'll be chucking over a good thing, and you won't see Bella Donna when the figures are hoisted."

"Oh, very well: I'll go," said Braetoun.

"And the sooner the better, my lord, and your friend too. Me and Sam and the mare can't stand no fidgeting just now when we're ripe, so if you want the mare to win this race you must keep outer my stable."

"His insolence: it's insufferable," cried Braetoun, as soon as they were out in the road, the boy grinning, and the mare striking out with her off fore hoof, as they passed. "And here I am, Cy, regularly at their mercy. I felt as if I could have broken that young scoundrel's neck—the grinning ape!"

Daines said nothing, but walked beside his companion back to the hotel, beginning to feel that perhaps after all he was misjudging him, and at last leaving him to his own devices, he went on to the course, and had a look round in the faint hope that he might see Baby Lee somewhere about, she having perhaps come down to see Braetoun's horse win.

CHAPTER LIV.

In his Deepest Hole.

The day wore on, but Daines looked in vain. He examined every carriage drawn up in the best places along the course; went opposite the grand stand to scan it with his race glass, and finally took a ticket and went up to the very top, and from there searched the sides of the course in every direction, but there was no sign.

One race had been run, and the horses were out for the next, and coming slowly from the saddling paddock, but the bright animated looking scene was like a confused mass of people to Daines, who neither saw nor heard anything of what was going on, till he had descended and was about to return to the hotel in search of Braetoun, hoping that perhaps after all he would find out where Lucy was by watching her old lover's movements. For once more the feeling was gaining strength that Braetoun had brought her down, and she was waiting somewhere to see the race.

He was about half-way back to his hotel, when he passed a knot of business-looking men—horsey business-looking men—talking eagerly together, and as he was close up another joined them.

"It's right enough," he said excitedly. "Braetoun's mare won't come up to the post. She can't run."

The words did not impress Daines at first, his mind was too full of his own trouble, but at the end of a score of yards their importance to his old companion began to grow clearer.

Braetoun's mare not run? Why, it meant ruin to him, after the book he had made; and growing excited now, he hurried on toward the hotel, to see Braetoun and learn whether it was the truth.

But he did not have to go as far as the hotel, for about half-way there he encountered the object of his search in company with the trainer—Braetoun with his face ghastly, and Vinnis flushed as if with drink.

"Why, Braetoun, what does this mean?" said Daines eagerly.

"Ruin—and a bullet through my brain, I suppose," said the young man, with unnatural calmness.

"But, but I don't understand."

"Ask this old scoundrel," said Braetoun, with a mocking laugh.

"Now don't you get a-calling names, my lord, because that won't mend it," said the man. "I put it to you, sir," he continued, turning to Daines; "you come into the stable this morning where I didn't want you, and you see for yourself as the mare was in just puffick condition. Even his lordship'll own that."

"Oh, yes, I own that," said Braetoun, with a peculiar laugh.

"And he knows, too, how I'd been a-beggin' and praying of him to keep away."

"Yes, from his own stable," said Daines.

"'Ired, sir, 'ired, or it would ha' been my stable. But he would come, messing about."

"Confound you; speak out," cried Daines impatiently. "Why can't the mare run?"

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"That's what I'm a-tellin' on you, sir, if you'll let me," said the man. "Don't you turn 'ot and 'orty too, like his lordship, here. It's 'art-breaking to me. My charickter's spyled as a trainer, beside the money I shall lose, for I'd put all I'd got on the mare—years o' honest savings, sir."

"Why can't the mare run? She looked in splendid condition an hour ago."

"She is in puffick condition, sir, but how could I help it? I've been watching her night and day my very own self."

"Then she has been got at—hocussed?"

"A mare as I trained, sir?" said the man scornfully. "Not she, sir. I've the key o' that there stable in my pocket—leastwise I had till his lordship snatched it from me, as no gentleman would ha' done, but that's neither here nor there, sir."

"Will you come to the point?" cried Daines, and Braetoun uttered a low curious laugh.

"Yes, sir, I am a-coming to the point. It's all his lordship's doing, and he's ruined me and my charickter for life. He would keep on coming to the stable over and over again this morning, and last night, for the matter o' that, and giving my boy, Sam, orders and orders till the young rip was half mad. You see what he was this morning, sir."

"Yes, insolent enough to make one want to horsewhip him," said Daines.

"That's it, sir—that's it, only it warn't insolence; it was pride. He's the best jockey going, sir. My own training: and he'd ha' taken that there 'orse—I mean, mare—to the winning post, showing the field her 'eels, but as soon as my lord and you had gone outer the stable his pride got the better on him, and he jumps off the corn-bin, and 'Father,' he says, 'that there's done it at last. I may be a light weight and a little un, but I'm a man now, and I can't stand it, and I won't.'"

"That's it, Cy," said Braetoun, with a bitter laugh. "It was the pride of the noble boy who knew his value—that he was the only one who could ride the mare, and he has struck."

"Struck?" cried Daines.

"No, sir, no, it ain't that," said Vinnis, "he's about 'art-broken. He couldn't do it. 'Father,' he says, 'I can't ride her now. It's all over. I feel as if I can never ride again.'"

"Here, we're wasting time," cried Daines. "Quick, Rod, old man: you must win this race. It's a matter of money. Pay, man, and win."

"No, sir," said the trainer, drawing himself up; "don't you go and insult us too. I'm above suspicion, and as to that boy of mine, he wouldn't do a mean action to save his life."

"No," said Braetoun, taking out a cigar, and lighting it calmly, "not to save his life."

"Where is he now?" cried Daines.

"That's what I don't know, sir," said Vinnis piteously. "Rooshed outer the stable after I'd begged and prayed of him to stop. I'd ha' gone down on my bended knees to him, I would, but he'd turned mad with pride. 'His lordship treats me as if I was muck, father,' he says, 'and I can't stand it;' and as I said afore, roosh, he does, out of the stable, ready as he was, with his lordship's colours on—amber satin shirt, and black an' amber cap, and he's gone."

"Gone where?" cried Daines.

"'Eaven, I b'lieve, sir," said the man, rubbing one eye with his knuckle. "It's my b'lief, sir, as they'll drag him out o' the river as soon as the race is over."

"Yes, Cy," said Braetoun mockingly; "the little beast thought he'd wash his equine sins away before he went upward. He was too good to live." Then with a shriek of rage he turned upon the trainer. "Curse you, you lying hound! You've sold me. Out of my sight, or before I finish myself, I'll blow out your cursed brains."

"Well!" cried the trainer, in virtuous indignation, "if that's being a lord——"

"D——n you! go!" roared Daines, and raising his cane he struck the man with all his might across the face.

"Help me back to the hotel, Cy, old man," whispered Braetoun, with a ghastly look in his face. "Quick!"

"Here, driver!" cried Daines to a man who was passing, and he hurried his friend into an open fly. "Queen's Hotel, quick!"

"Right, sir;" and they were driven off, leaving the trainer gesticulating to a crowd collecting now, and the next moment a yell of execration was raised.

"Want to get at me?" panted Braetoun. "Well, stop the fly, and let them."

"No," cried Daines, who was standing up in the fly, looking over the hood; "they're at him, hunting him like a pack of hounds, and he's running for his life. Now, hold up, man. I believe what you said about Lucy, and I want to help you, for old times' sake."

"Thankye, old chap.—Yes, it was true, lad. I haven't seen her. She isn't here."

"Can't anything be done?"

"Yes: I'll give you the key, and you can go to the stable and put a bullet in Bella Donna's forehead."

"Talk sense, man."

"That is sense. No one but that boy can ride her."

"Then he must be found. Look here: if he wins, what can you afford to give him?"

"A thou.," said Braetoun, with a flash of eagerness in his eyes—"I'll give him two."

"That's right. He's away from his father now. Here we are. No foolery. You'd want a great many dives in the river to wash away your sins, man. You can't afford to die yet. Go up to your room and wait. Is there plenty of time?"

"A full half-hour yet," said Braetoun excitedly.

"Good. You're not fit to stir."

"No: I shall break down."

"Then wait. If that boy is to be found I'll bring him to you yet. In with you." And then, as Braetoun staggered into the hotel, Daines gave an order to the driver, and the horse was lashed into a gallop.

(To be concluded.)

ON the conclusion of this story we shall commence a new serial by MR. ALLEN UPWARD, whose name is now so well known as the author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," appearing in PEARSON'S MAGAZINE. The title of the new story will be—

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READ THIS CAREFULLY, and if you want one send at once. We have bought up the entire stock of a large firm of Organette dealers at one-sixth the original cost. We have 600 only left. We offer them at 10s. 6d. Each organette is packed in a wooden case. We give six rolls of music with each instrument. Every part is thoroughly well made and fitted with automatic working rollers, the best quality reeds, firm full tone. Ever one wants music in the home for the winter months, and this is one of those exceptional opportunities which occasionally occur of obtaining a high-class instrument at far below cost. Once gone, gone for ever, as we cannot get any more. If you want one, kindly send us 10s. 6d., and we will at once send you one packed free in case. Please cut out the coupon below and send it with order, or get your friends to call and buy one for you.

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Entitles the sender to one Organette as advertised for 10s. 6d., unless we are sold out.
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Ladies desiring any improvement in this direction should send me stamp for free particulars of a simple, inexpensive, harmless self-treatment, whereby a *full natural bust* can be obtained. Address, in confidence, Mrs. B. K. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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DRIVE AWAY THE DREADFUL DREAMS.

"A DREAM cometh of a multitude of business," says an ancient Hebrew proverb. Yes, and of many things besides business. The wisest man on earth knows no more than you do about how the body and the mind live and work together. All we know is that the condition of the body gives character and direction to the action of the mind, whether we wake or sleep. And the reverse is also largely true. The *method* of it is a mystery, and it's no use trying to fathom it. The facts, and how far we can control them, are all we need to trouble ourselves about.

Here, for example, is a woman who says that at a certain time she was disturbed with *frightful dreams*. They so broke her sleep and tired her out that she rose from her bed in the morning more exhausted than after a hard day's labour. That is exactly as it would be, if, without waking you, somebody should lance one of your veins and draw away a big bowlful of blood.

The ailment which led to this result began, she says, in June, 1891. At first there was nothing she could give a name to. She found herself weary, languid, and fatigued, as after a long and arduous journey; yet she had not left her home nor done any unusual work. She lost her life and energy as she might have lost a shilling without an idea how it came to pass.

"I had a foul taste in my mouth," she says, "and no wish to eat. After taking the least morsel I at once began to suffer pain in the chest and between the shoulder-blades. My head got so bad that when I rose suddenly from the chair, or stooped for any purpose, everything seemed to go whirling around me, and I felt as if I must fall to the ground."

At this point she speaks of her terrible dreams, already alluded to, and then continues: "My hands and feet were cold and clammy, and I became pale and wan as death. All the blood seemed to be gone from me. In the night—beside the awful dreams—I was troubled with sweats which took away the remnant of my strength.

"With all this, and with lack of power to relish and digest food, I came to be so low-spirited and weak that I gave up going outside the house. And what gave me most anxiety was a fear that I was going into a decline, my father and sister having died of consumption. Every day I grew weaker until my husband and friends gave up all hopes of me. I had medical treatment, but it did not avail.

"While in this condition, about as much dead as alive, my husband read in a little book of the cures wrought, often in desperate cases, by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. He urged me to try it, but I answered him indifferently, having no faith in it. However, he got me a bottle at Mr. C. E. Davies', chemist, King Street, Carmarthen, and after having used it for only a week, I realised an improvement. My appetite was better, and what I ate agreed with me and gave me strength. This, as you may suppose, made me hopeful; and I willingly consented to continue with this medicine—the only one that had done me any good. Briefly, then, after having taken two bottles more, I was completely cured, and have kept well ever since. I have related these facts to many persons, and you are at liberty to publish them, if you wish, for the guidance of others similarly afflicted. (Signed) (Mrs.) Anne Davies, Cilarddu, Conwil, near Carmarthen, December 6th, 1894."

That Mrs. Davies did not have organic disease of the lungs (consumption) is shown by her rapid and complete recovery. But she had a disease which simulates consumption, and is (in a large sense) even more dangerous—chronic inflammatory dyspepsia, learnedly called gastritis. This disease, with its sequences, sweeps away more lives than consumption, and is infinitely more productive of suffering. Yet Mother Seigel's Syrup will cure it. Let us keep that fact always before our minds.

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